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Report: SEALs may have had motive to kill GI

Stars and Stripes

Two Navy SEALs being investigated in the strangling death of a Green Beret in Mali may have sought to prevent him from revealing a money-skimming scheme, according to news reports.

The New York Times and Daily Beast, citing unnamed military sources, said Staff Sgt. Logan Melgar, who was part of

a small U.S. counterterrorism mission in the country when he was killed in June, may have discovered theft by the SEALs.

The two men are under investigation and on administrative leave, The New York Times report said.

"An American service member who knew Sergeant Melgar said he was under the impression that the sergeant had stumbled on some sort of

money-skimming scheme involving the Navy commandos," the Times reported.

"A retired senior enlisted sailor who served in SEAL Team 6 said Sergeant Melgar discovered the scheme and threatened to report the Navy commandos to the authorities."

Melgar shared embassy housing with the two SEALs in Mali's capital, Bamako. So far, no one has been charged in Mel-

gar's death. A military medical examiner determined the cause was "a homicide by asphyxiation." In an Army investigative report, the two SEALs said they were wrestling with Melgar and found him "unresponsive" after getting off him, the Times reported.

The Naval Criminal Investigative Service took over the case in late September.

Defector raced to S. Korea line amid a hail of gunfire

BY KIM GAMEL

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — A North Korean soldier defected to the South by driving a military jeep to the line that divides the peninsula, then sprinting across it under a hail of gunfire from his former comrades, officials said Tuesday.

The stunning escape in a jointly secured area of the Demilitarized Zone happened at a time of high tensions over North Korea's nuclear weapons program, raising fears the communist state could conduct a provocation after a two-month lull in missile-testing activity.

The soldier was airlifted to a hospital south of Seoul after he was found bleeding under a pile of leaves Monday in the truce village of Panmunjom, the only point in the DMZ where both sides come face to face.

It was the first shooting in the Joint Security Area since 1984, but U.S. and South Korean forces did not return fire. More than 30,000 North Koreans have defected to the South since the end of the 1950-53 war, but it's rare for soldiers to flee across the DMZ, much less the JSA.

North Korea has not commented on the shooting, but it usually responds angrily to defections and often accuses South Korea of kidnapping its citizens. The defection came less than a week after President Donald Trump made his first official visit to South Korea amid soaring tensions over the growing nuclear and missile threat from the North.

The U.S.-led United Nations Command, which oversees the South Korean side of the JSA, said the defector drove the jeep near the de facto border line.

"He then exited the vehicle and continued fleeing south across the line as he was fired upon by other soldiers from North Korea," it said in a statement. "The individual initially took cover near a building on the southern side of the JSA."

U.S. and South Korean forces recovered him about 4 p.m., then took him to Ajou University Medical Center south of Seoul, along with a UNC security escort and translator, it said.

The next 10 days will be crucial for the soldier's recovery, Lee Guk-jong, a doctor at the hospital, was quoted by the Yonhap News Agency as saying.

AFRICOM: Niger mission planners remain on job

BY JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — More than a month after four U.S. soldiers were killed in an ambush in Niger, all military leaders involved in the planning of the mission remain on the job with no immediate plans to relieve any team members, U.S. Africa Command said.

"Simply put — nobody has been put on administrative leave or relieved of command at this time," AFRICOM spokeswoman Samantha Reho said. "I'd like to stress that the fact there is an investigation does not necessarily indicate there's been any wrongdoing related to this event."

AFRICOM is looking into what occurred during the Oct. 4 attack that left a U.S. special operations team outgunned while on patrol in hostile territory. AFRICOM has dispatched investigators to the site of the ambush near Niger's border with Mali.

When high-profile military mishaps occur, commanders directly involved are sometimes reassigned or fired before a final determination. In the Navy, several commanders were relieved after two deadly collisions this

year involving the destroyers USS Fitzgerald and USS John S. McCain. The firings, which included officers ranging from captain to vice admiral, came before the Navy concluded the investigation into the incidents.

Numerous questions have been raised in the Niger ambush about the circumstances and whether U.S. forces had sufficient resources to carry out patrols where different militant groups are known to operate.

"The investigation is reviewing the facts and circumstances surrounding the attack on Oct. 4, and it will explore any issues or deficiencies with policy, procedures, resources, doctrine, training and leadership that may have contributed to this incident," Reho said. The AFRICOM investigation is not expected to be finished until January.

The roughly 40-person U.S.-Nigerien patrol, which included 12 U.S. soldiers, came under attack by about 50 Islamic State fighters in midmorning as the unit was returning to its camp. The patrol had left the Nigerien capital of Niamey on Oct. 3 to meet with local leaders near Tongo Tongo, about 53 miles to the north.

Senate told nuke launch order can be refused

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A retired Air Force general told the Senate on Tuesday that an order from President Donald Trump or any of his successors to launch nuclear weapons can be refused by the top officer at U.S. Strategic Command if that order is determined to be illegal.

During testimony before the Foreign Relations Committee, retired Gen. Robert Kehler said the U.S. armed forces are obligated to follow legal orders, not illegal ones. Kehler, who served as the head of Strategic Command from January 2011 to November 2013, said the legal principles of military necessity, distinction and proportionality also apply to decisions about nuclear weapons use. The command would control nuclear forces in a war.

Sen. Ben Cardin, of Maryland, the committee's top ranking Democrat, asked Kehler if that means Strategic Command can deny the president's order if

it fails the test of proportionality and legality.

"Yes," Kehler responded, adding such a situation would lead to a "very difficult conversation." It might prompt a president to put a new general in charge to carry out his order, said Brian McKeon, a former acting undersecretary of defense for policy during the Obama administration, who testified alongside Kehler.

The hearing comes as the threat of nuclear attack from North Korea remains a serious concern. Trump's taunting tweets aimed at Pyongyang have sparked concerns primarily among congressional Democrats that he may be inciting a war with North Korea.

But if a president's order to fire nuclear weapons, even preemptively, is determined to be sound and legal, there's no one who can stop him.

Not Congress. Not his secretary of defense. And by design, not the military officers who

would be duty-bound to execute the order.

As Bruce Blair, a former nuclear missile launch officer and a co-founder of Global Zero, the international movement for the elimination of nuclear weapons, has put it: "The protocol for ordering the use of nuclear weapons endows every president with civilization-ending power."

Some aspects of presidential nuclear war-making powers are secret and therefore not well understood by the public. The system is built for fast decision-making, not debate. That's because speed is seen as essential in a crisis with a nuclear peer like Russia. Unlike North Korea, Russia has enough nuclear weapons to destroy the U.S. in minutes.

Russia's long-range missiles could reach the U.S. in about 30 minutes. Submarine-launched missiles fired from nearer U.S. shores might arrive in half that time. Given that some of the U.S. response time would be taken up by administrative steps, the

president would have less than 10 minutes to absorb the information, review his options and make his decision, according to a December 2016 report by nuclear arms specialist Amy Woolf of the Congressional Research Service.

A president who decided to launch a nuclear attack — either in retaliation for a nuclear strike or in anticipation of one — would first hold an emergency conference with the defense secretary, the Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman and other advisers. The commander of U.S. Strategic Command, now Air Force Gen. John Hyten, would brief the president on strike options, and the president would make his decision.

The president would communicate his decision and transmit his authorization through a device called the nuclear football, a suitcase carried by a military aide. It's equipped with communication tools and a book with prepared war plans.

Air Force says airman did not protest; he felt faint

BY WILLIAM HOWARD

Stars and Stripes

RAF MILDENHALL, England — An airman attacked on social media for appearing to take a knee in protest during a Remembrance Day service near the Mildenhall War Memorial on Sunday morning was just feeling faint, Air Force officials said.

The airman first class from RAF Mildenhall, while participating in a ceremony detail in dress uniform, stood and saluted during the U.S. and British national anthems, according to photos contributed to Stars and Stripes. He stepped backward out of the formation and fell to a knee when the music to reveille began playing.

Feeling faint after locking the knees during formation "can be a common occurrence for airmen participating in

these types of events and at no time did this airman display or intend any disrespect to either the U.S. or U.K. servicemembers the event was honoring," the base said in a statement Monday.

The airman's name is being withheld because of threats he has received and concerns about his safety, the base said.

Joy Bush, a British civilian, said she watched it happen and was confused by why anyone would leave a formation.

A friend of the airman, possibly trying to be humorous, told Bush that he was mimicking football player Colin Kaepernick's protest movement against police brutality.

"I waited till the music had finished and went around to the area," Bush told Stars and Stripes. "His friend was standing behind him and at this point and he was sitting on a small

wall. I asked if he was ill or if he took a knee in protest and his friend clearly said he took a knee in protest.

"If his friend was joking, then he has opened a can of worms for the guy that took a knee," she said.

Soon after the event, a photo of the airman taking a knee was shared on the Facebook Traditional British Group. The site also includes multiple posts attacking immigration, left-wing politics, the media and the influence of minority groups.

The photo was "sent in by a page reader," according to the site, and was later posted in other Facebook groups and the popular site Reddit.

After 20 hours, the initial Facebook post received almost 700 shares and 400 comments. Some called for punishment against the airman and a few commenters threatened his

safety.

A screenshot posted of a comment by someone identified on Facebook as a crew chief at Mildenhall stated that the airman, whom he said he worked with, knelt because he was about to pass out.

Other users argued that he had locked his knees and stepped out so he wouldn't collapse. According to the formation leader, that is what happened.

"It can happen that airmen begin to feel unwell or faint during a formation, so I briefed them all ahead of time that they should step out and take a seat for their own safety if they began to feel at all lightheaded, which is exactly what happened in this particular case," said Maj. Michael Opich, maintenance operations flight commander for the 100th Maintenance Group.

Another woman accuses Moore of groping

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Roy Moore's support from fellow Republicans is hemorrhaging after a second woman accused the Alabamian of groping her when she was a teenager in the late 1970s, the latest setback to his effort to win an open Senate seat that suddenly seems up for grabs.

"I can tell you without hesitation this is absolutely false," Moore said Monday at an abruptly called news conference in Gallant, Ala., after the latest allegations were made. "I never did what she said I did. I don't even know the woman."

The former state Supreme Court judge and outspoken Christian conservative spoke after a tearful Beverly Young Nelson, now 56, detailed new allegations to reporters in an emotional appearance in New York.

One night when she was 16, Moore offered to drive her home from her after-school job at a restaurant in Gadsden, Ala., she said. Moore, a regular customer, instead parked behind the restaurant and locked the door to keep her inside,

squeezing her neck while trying to push her head toward his crotch and trying to pull her shirt off, Nelson said.

"I thought that he was going to rape me," she said.

Moore stopped, and as she left the car, he warned no one would believe her because he was a county prosecutor, Nelson said. She said her neck was "black and blue and purple" the next morning.

Even before Nelson's news conference, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., took a remarkably personal swipe at Moore, based on last week's Washington Post reports of other incidents involving Moore and teenage girls decades ago.

"I believe the women," said McConnell, R-Ky., marking an intensified effort by leaders to ditch Moore before a Dec. 12 special election that has swung from an assured GOP victory to one that Democrats could conceivably swipe.

Moore fired back at McConnell on Twitter: "The person who should step aside is @SenateMajLdr Mitch Mc-

Connell. He has failed conservatives and must be replaced. #DrainTheSwamp."

He also signaled he has no intention of ending his candidacy, writing in a fundraising appeal, "I'd be honored to have you in my corner with me while I slug it out with the forces of evil trying to keep me out of Washington."

The exchange between McConnell and Moore underscored the civil war between establishment Republicans worried that candidates like Moore could cost them their Senate majority and hard-right elements who say McConnell is not conservative enough.

Moore has been backed by Steve Bannon, President Donald Trump's former chief White House adviser. Bannon is openly seeking GOP Senate challengers who will pledge to dump McConnell.

A political committee linked to McConnell spent huge sums unsuccessfully trying to defeat Moore in the GOP's September primary, but Moore defeated incumbent GOP Sen. Luther Strange.

Republicans have discussed

having another Republican like Strange stage a write-in candidacy, but Strange told reporters Monday "a write-in candidacy is highly unlikely."

"I made my case during the election," Strange said.

McConnell, who last week said Moore should stand down if the allegations were true, was joined by other Republicans who intensified their opposition to him.

No. 2 Senate GOP leader John Cornyn and his Texas Republican colleague, Sen. Ted Cruz, both withdrew their endorsements of Moore. Cory Gardner, of Colorado, who heads the Senate GOP's campaign organization, said if Moore is elected, senators should expel him "because he does not meet the ethical and moral requirements" of the Senate.

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said Moore "should not be a United States senator, no matter what it takes." Sen. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz., who's not seeking reelection after criticizing Trump, said he'd "vote for the Democrat" if he had to choose between Moore and Doug Jones.

Sessions considers Clinton Foundation probe

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Attorney General Jeff Sessions is leaving open the possibility that a special counsel could be appointed to look into Clinton Foundation dealings and an Obama administration-era uranium deal, the Justice Department said, responding to concerns from Republican lawmakers.

The department said in a letter to the House Judiciary Committee on Monday that Sessions had directed senior federal prosecutors to "evaluate certain issues" raised in recent weeks by members of Congress, including allegations that the Clinton Foundation benefited from a years-old uranium transaction involving a Russian-backed company.

President Donald Trump has

repeatedly implored the Justice Department on social media to investigate the deal, including in a series of Twitter posts this month in which he lamented not having more direct influence over the agency's affairs.

The prosecutors will report to Sessions and Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein and recommend whether any new investigations should be opened, whether any matters currently under investigation require additional resources and whether it might be necessary to appoint a special counsel to oversee a probe, according to a letter to House Committee on the Judiciary Chairman Rep. Robert Goodlatte, R-Va.

Any appointment of a new special counsel, particularly in response to calls from

members of Congress or from Trump himself, is likely to lead to complaints about an undue political influence on a department that is meant to function outside of any partisan sway or demand.

Though the Justice Department falls within the executive branch and its priorities are historically in line with those of the president, the White House is not supposed to influence the decisions of prosecutors on any particular case.

The Justice Department sought to address those concerns in its letter, with Assistant Attorney General Stephen Boyd saying the department "will never evaluate any matter except on the facts and the law."

"Professionalism, integrity

and public confidence in the department's work is critical for us, and no priority is higher," he added.

Nonetheless, the action follows a series of critical public statements by Trump that observers said blurred the bright line between the White House and the Justice Department.

In recent weeks, he has repeatedly weighed in via Twitter on Justice Department business, calling for investigations of Democrats and challenging Sessions to be more aggressive in going after his political opponents, expressing particular support for investigating the Clinton Foundation.

He also has suggested at times that Sessions' job could be in jeopardy.

Iran fears quake toll will rise as rescuers clear the rubble

Associated Press

SARPOL-E-ZAHAB, Iran — Rescuers on Tuesday used backhoes and heavy equipment to dig through the debris of buildings toppled by a powerful earthquake on the border between Iran and Iraq that killed more than 530 people, with weeping women crying out to God as aid workers found new bodies.

The grim work began in earnest again at dawn in the Kurdish town of Sarpol-e-Zahab in the western Iranian province of Kermanshah, which appears to be the hardest hit in the magnitude-7.3 earthquake.

Kermanshah, an almost entirely Kurdish province nestled in the Zagros Mountains that run along the border with Iraq, suffered all of Iran's fatalities from the temblor Sunday night that shook 14 of the country's 31 provinces.

Rescuers and local residents stood atop the remains of apartment complexes Tuesday, looking through the rubble. They used heavy blankets to carry away corpses.

The hospital in Sarpol-e-Zahab was heavily damaged, and the army set up field hospitals, although many of the injured were moved to other cities.

The quake also damaged an army garrison and buildings in the border city and killed an unspecified number of soldiers, according to reports.

There are fears more dead could be in the

rubble in Sarpol-e-Zahab and other rural villages of Kermanshah province. Mohammad Ali Monshizadeh, a spokesman for the provincial forensic department, said possibly as many as 150 people were buried by family members after the earthquake in remote villages who had not been counted in the official death toll, the semi-official ISNA news agency reported.

President Hassan Rouhani arrived in Kermanshah province Tuesday to see the damage and offer support to those affected.

Cleric Abdolhossein Moezi, a representative of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei who also is touring the area, said there was a need for more relief material and "security."

The quake killed 530 people in Iran and injured 7,460, the state-run IRNA news agency reported Tuesday. Most of the injuries were minor, with fewer than 1,000 still hospitalized, Iran's crisis management headquarters spokesman Behnam Saeedi told state TV.

The quake was centered about 19 miles outside the eastern Iraqi city of Halabja, according to the U.S. Geological Survey, and struck 14.4 miles below the surface. It caused Dubai's skyscrapers to sway and could be felt 660 miles away on the Mediterranean coast.

Seven deaths occurred in Iraq and 535 people were injured, all in the country's northern, semi-autonomous Kurdish region, according to its Interior Ministry.

4th person shot dead in Tampa area

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Police searched a cordoned off Florida neighborhood Tuesday after a fourth person was shot dead, possibly by a serial killer.

Tampa police say residents of the city's Seminole Heights neighborhood reported hearing shots just before 5 a.m. Tuesday. When officers arrived, they found the body of Ronald Felton, 60, in the street. They say Felton had been walking across the street to meet someone when the gunman came up behind him and fired.

Spokesman Steve Hegarty said detectives can't immediately say whether Felton's shooting is related to last month's 10-day spree where three people were slain, but officers are treating it like it is. The previous three victims were alone and had gotten off a bus when they were gunned down at night for no apparent reason. None were robbed.

Public records show Felton lived about 2.5 miles from the shooting scene.

Police said they are looking for a thin black man, about 6 feet tall, wearing black clothing and carrying a large handgun. They are asking residents to examine video from any security cameras they have.

Hegarty said the suspect couldn't have "gone very far, and we're talking to as many people as we can to see what they may have seen."

After the earlier shootings, police increased patrols in the neighborhood and released surveillance videos of a hooded suspect.

In a security video taken moments after Benjamin Mitchell became the first victim on Oct. 9, the suspect is seen running from the scene.

Two days after Mitchell, 22, was shot, Monica Hoffa, 32, was gunned down. And on Oct. 19, Anthony Naiboa, 20, was shot after taking the wrong bus home from his new job. Police patrolling nearby heard the gunshots and rushed to the scene to find Naiboa dead.

Firm: At least 15 caught fire after Taser stunnings

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — The maker of Tasers said Monday that at least 15 people have caught fire, and five have died, after being stunned while near flammable materials, including an Oklahoma man who was burned beyond recognition after he was shocked and reportedly got into his gasoline-soaked van.

Axon spokesman Steve Tuttle said the deaths include the man shocked Nov. 7 by a police officer in the town of Lindsey, about 45 miles south of Oklahoma City, although authorities say they are still investigating whether the man lit himself on fire.

"We've seen it happen," Tuttle said. "It's happened about 15 times in 24 years ... out of

about 3.5 million field uses" of the device, known as a conducted electrical weapon, or CEW. "It's a known situation. Thankfully, it's been a very rare event," he said.

Investigators say the man in Oklahoma who caught fire was armed with a gun and also was carrying a lighter. An officer stunned him with a Taser, but the man managed to fight his way back into his van, where he burst into flames.

Authorities said they're still trying to determine whether the man used his lighter to start the fire or whether the Taser was the cause.

Scottsdale, Ariz.-based Axon notes on its website that a Taser can cause flammable materials, including gasoline, to catch fire.

"Do not knowingly use a CEW in the presence of any explosive or flammable substance unless the situation justifies the increased risk," the website states.

The names of the man and the officers involved in the confrontation have not been released. The dead man's body was sent to the state medical examiner's office for positive identification and to try to determine the cause of the blaze.

McClain County Sheriff's Detective David Tompkins, who is taking part in the investigation, said it appears the officer was probably justified in using the Taser. "Right now, I think it will be justified, unless something else comes up to change my mind," he said.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Rare wild alligator snapping turtle found

IL CHAMPAIGN — Researchers reported the first sighting of a wild alligator snapping turtle in Illinois in 30 years.

In a news release, the University of Illinois said state Natural History Survey herpetologist Chris Phillips was looking for a young male alligator that had recently been released in Union County's Clear Creek when he discovered a 22-pound female that was at least 18 years old.

Researchers are trying to determine whether the discovery of the state-endangered species offers hope about the animal's survival on its own or is the last of its kind to have survived in Illinois without human intervention. It's also not clear how much help this particular turtle will be because after researchers attached a radio transmitter to its back for tracking, the transmitter battery died.

Man in standoff says he was shooting rats

FL PALM HARBOR — After an eight-hour standoff with police, a Florida man told officers he was only shooting at rats in his yard with a rifle.

The Pinellas County Sheriff's Office said in a news release that neighbors in the Palm Harbor area began reporting hearing gunshots about 3 a.m. Sunday. Deputies heard more shots coming from a house after they arrived.

Authorities said they set up a perimeter around the house where Stephen Jonas, 51, lives, trying to contact him for about eight hours. Finally, investigators said, Jonas walked out and was arrested. Deputies found a .223-caliber rifle and many other weapons inside.

Man bitten by possibly rabid raccoon is treated

MA NORTHAMPTON — A Massachusetts man is being treated for rabies after being attacked by a suspected rabid raccoon over the weekend.

Paul Bradish, of Northampton, told The Daily Hampshire Gazette he was letting his dog out about 5:30 a.m. Saturday when the raccoon pounced. He beat the animal with his flashlight and it fled, but when he got back inside his house he noticed blood on his leg. He called police but officers could not find the raccoon. He then went to the hospital for his first set of rabies shots. His dog is up to date on her vaccinations.

Cattle drive scrubbed after cows wander

WI LEBANON — A weekend cattle drive planned for southern Wisconsin was scrubbed after cows began wandering into a soybean field.

A crew of about 15 people on horseback had planned to drive 50 head of cattle from the town of Lebanon to a farm near Juneau over about four hours Sunday morning. Authorities said crews headed the herd home after cows meandered into and damaged the soybean field at the start of the route. Cattle were corralled after the detour, and the drive was called off.

Mary Tyler Moore statue back at mall

MN MINNEAPOLIS — A statue of Mary Tyler Moore tossing her hat in the air is back at its familiar spot in downtown Minneapolis.

A bronze statue of the Emmy-winning star of "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" was returned Saturday to its origi-

nal location at Nicollet Mall. The life-sized statue, along with other public art, had been removed during a \$50 million mall reconstruction project.

After being temporarily in storage, the statue was set up in the city's visitor information center nearby. A hat was available for visitors to toss alongside the statue, which depicts Moore in the opening credits of her popular 1970s TV sitcom set in Minneapolis. Moore died in January at age 80.

Police: Cab driver hit on head with hockey stick

NY NEW YORK — New York City police said a livery cab driver died when an angry pedestrian struck him in the head with a hockey stick and the driver crashed the car.

Police said the 68-year-old driver was hit in the head by the pedestrian late Saturday while stopped at a Manhattan intersection. The man returned to his vehicle, drove for several blocks and struck a median.

Police identified him as Randolph Tolk, of West New York, N.J. He was pronounced dead at a local hospital. Police said the pedestrian who struck the driver fled on foot and has not been identified.

Pay phone in cellphone dead zone going away

WA VERLOT — One of the only pay phones left in one of Washington state's most beautiful and dangerous outdoor destinations is slated to be removed, and that has some emergency workers worried that visitors could be left in a dead zone.

The Everett Herald reported there is little to no cellphone service along the Mountain Loop Highway that brings travelers to the Big Four Ice Caves near the Verlot ranger station.

The caves draw about 50,000 visitors annually. Most 911 calls for the region come from the pay phone at the Verlot Public Service Center.

Frontier Communications, which owns the phone, said the decision to decommission pay phones is based on usage, condition and other considerations.

Police search for ring lost in candy bag

VT SOUTH BURLINGTON — A trick-or-treater may have picked up more than candy in South Burlington.

Police said a woman who lives in the Butler Farm neighborhood said she accidentally dropped her yellow gold and diamond eternity wedding band into a trick-or-treater's bag on Halloween. She said others have reported that someone posted on social media about finding the ring but she couldn't find the post. Police are asking parents to check their children's candy bags if they visited the development.

'Iron Man' inventor sets world record

NY NEW YORK — A British inventor billed as a real-life version of the superhero Iron Man has hit the fastest speed in a body-controlled jet engine power suit at 32 mph, a Guinness world record.

The record keeper announced last week's feat on Thursday as part of its annual Guinness World Records day.

Other marks announced included a Swedish baker's record for the world's largest vegan cake, which weighed in at more than 1,000 pounds. Also, Harlem Globetrotter Thunder Law successfully made a basket Sunday on a 50-foot high hoop for a new mark.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

Judge, Bellinger voted Rookies of Year

Associated Press

The only major question was whether it would be unanimous — and it was.

Aaron Judge and Cody Bellinger are baseball's Rookies of the Year, after their record-setting home run binges left no need for any dissenting opinions. Judge led the American League with 52 homers, the most ever by a rookie. Bellinger hit 39 and had to settle for the National League's rookie record.

Judge and Bellinger received every first-place vote available from the Baseball Writers' Association of America. Judge became the first New York Yankees player to receive this award since Derek Jeter in 1996. Bellinger gave the Dodgers a record 18th Rookie of the Year winner.

"Watching him from the West Coast, what he did on the East Coast was awesome," Bellinger said. "I was a big fan of his, and met him during the All-Star game, and he's a humble dude. I think we're both reflecting, now that the season's over, on the kind of seasons that we've had."

This was the first time both Rookie of the Year awards were unanimous since 1997, when Nomar Garciaparra of Boston and Scott Rolen of Philadelphia won.

This season's votes were announced Monday night. Boston outfielder Andrew Benintendi finished second in the AL, followed by Baltimore slugger Trey Mancini. St. Louis infielder Paul DeJong was the NL runner-up, with Pittsburgh first baseman Josh Bell finishing third.

Judge is also an MVP finalist.

"Obviously it was an amazing, remarkable year that no one would have predicted," Yankees general manager Brian Cashman said. "When you drop 52 — I think he really should have had 53, one that instant replay didn't protect. ... It should be a higher number. It was just an incredible year."

Ichiro Suzuki in 2001 and Fred Lynn in 1975 are the only players to win the AL MVP and Rookie of the Year awards in the same year.

The Yankees entered this season with marginal expecta-

tions by their standards, but the prodigious power of Judge and catcher Gary Sanchez transformed them almost overnight into an exciting young team with tremendous potential. They made the postseason as a wild card.

"It's exciting times right now to be wearing pinstripes," Judge said. "To come up through the minor leagues with a lot of these guys, watch them develop, and now to see what they're doing at the major league level is really impressive."

Judge's 495-foot shot on June 11 was the longest home run in the major leagues this season, according to Statcast. Although he struck out 208 times in the regular season and 27 more in the postseason, the 25-year-old outfielder is one of a handful of reasons why the Yankees suddenly seem to have one of the brightest futures of any team in baseball.

New York came within a victory of the World Series this year, losing to Houston in Game 7 of the AL Championship Series. Bellinger's team made it to that final step, but Los Angeles fell to the Astros in a seven-

game World Series.

Bellinger is the second straight Dodgers player to win Rookie of the Year. Shortstop Corey Seager did it last year.

"The future is bright in L.A.," Bellinger said. "I know that I'm excited, as well as the other teammates. Obviously, we didn't have the end goal this year, but we're going to try and take it to the next level next year."

Bellinger made his big league debut in late April. By the time he turned 22 on July 13, he had 25 home runs. The 6-foot-4 first baseman is an appropriate counterpart to the powerful Judge. They even hit from opposite sides of the plate: Judge is a righty and Bellinger swings left-handed.

"He's not just a guy that went up there and hit home runs," Judge said. "He was a guy that played high-caliber first base for them. He could go out there and roam center field, left field, right field, wherever they needed him. To have that type of versatility and produce the numbers he did is something that you don't find too often."

Marlins' Stanton on market as GM meetings begin

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — For sale: 28-year-old chiseled slugger who led the major leagues with 59 home runs, the most in 16 years.

Price: \$295 million over a decade.

Complication: Giancarlo Stanton only goes where he wants to, since the star right fielder has a full no-trade provision.

Now under a new ownership group that put former New York Yankees star Derek Jeter in charge of baseball and business operations, the Miami Marlins have concluded their payroll-paring regime is willing to explore trades of Stanton and other high-priced players.

"I think over the next few

days I'll get a feel for what the marketplace is for our players," Marlins president of baseball operations Mike Hill said Monday, the opening day of the annual general managers' meetings.

Miami had a \$116 million payroll on Aug. 31, up from \$81 million at the end of last year. Bruce Sherman's group bought the team on Oct. 2 from Jeffrey Loria and is exploring trades for players who contributed to the team's eighth straight losing season. The Marlins have not made the playoffs since winning the 2003 World Series, the second-longest postseason drought behind Seattle.

Stanton's salary jumps from \$14.5 million this year to \$25 million next season. It peaks

at \$32 million annually from 2023-25.

When he spoke Oct. 25 at the World Series while receiving an award, Stanton said he didn't have "stamped-out ideas" whether he would want to stay in Miami during a rebuild. The Marlins seem to know which teams he would accept a trade to.

"I do have a sense, and we'll keep that internal, and at the appropriate time we'll discuss whatever we need to discuss," Hill said. "We work internally. We do what we need to do, and then if we need to present him with something, we'll do so at the appropriate time."

Among other costly Marlins next year are third baseman Martin Prado (\$14 million),

right-hander Edinson Volquez (\$13 million), center fielder Christian Yelich (\$7 million, with \$37.5 million more guaranteed over the following three years) and second baseman Dee Gordon (\$10.5 million, with \$27.5 million guaranteed over the following two seasons).

High-revenue teams would be the most likely matches. The New York Yankees do not appear to be a probable destination. Right fielder Aaron Judge won the AL Rookie of the Year award unanimously after hitting 52 homers, center fielder Aaron Hicks played well when he wasn't hurt, and Clint Frazier is competing for playing time among a group that includes veterans Brett Gardner and Jacoby Ellsbury.

Newton, Panthers roll over Dolphins

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Cam Newton was tired of the Carolina Panthers' defense getting all of the glory.

Newton took it as a challenge when the defense vaulted to the league's No. 1 ranking last week, saying it was time for the offense to strive to match them.

Newton did his part on Monday night, throwing for 254 yards and four touchdowns and running for 95 more as the Panthers piled up a franchise-record 548 yards in a 45-21 rout of the Miami Dolphins.

"It's nice to see them have this type of breakout game," Panthers coach Ron Rivera said of the offense, which had 30 first downs and converted 11 of 14 third downs.

Said Newton: "I still feel like we are scratching the surface of our potential in this offense. We have to trust in our ability to execute our coach's plan."

Newton improved to 5-1 in Monday night games, while averaging 270.5 yards per game and throwing 15 touchdowns and four interceptions.

"There is something about this stage with him," Rivera said. "He played a tremendous game."

Jonathan Stewart ran for a season-high 110 yards, and

Newton had a 69-yard jaunt on a read option as the Panthers racked up 294 yards on the ground. It was Stewart's first 100-yard game since last December at Washington.

Rookie Christian McCaffrey scored touchdowns rushing and receiving, and Devin Funchess caught five passes for 92 yards and two touchdowns as the Panthers (7-3) remained a half-game behind the NFC South-leading Saints heading into their bye week.

Newton had his share of fun on the field.

After being tackled on his 69-yard run, an exhausted Newton laid on the ground smiling and shaking his body as if trying to get feeling back into his legs.

Teammates joked with Newton that backup quarterback Derek Anderson could have scored on the play.

"When you ain't got no gas left and your check engine light is on and blinking, get gas at the next stop or so, man, you just have to try to celebrate when you can celebrate, brother," Newton said. "I was just hoping coach didn't come back with another run play for me."

He tiredly handed off on the next two plays.

"Everything was fun out there," said Funchess, who became the team's No. 1 receiver

when Kelvin Benjamin was traded to Buffalo two weeks ago.

Jay Cutler had 213 yards passing with two touchdowns and one interception for the Dolphins (4-5), who have lost three straight. Jarvis Landry and Julius Thomas both caught TD passes for Miami.

The game turned with 41 seconds left in the first half, when Luke Kuechly made a leaping interception along the sideline with Carolina leading 10-7.

Four plays later, Newton connected with tight end Ed Dickson on a 7-yard touchdown pass. That opened the floodgates as the Panthers scored touchdowns on five straight possessions in their most explosive output of the season.

"In an eight-minute span, the game got away from us," Dolphins coach Adam Gase said. "It snowballed. We couldn't prevent the big runs once they got going."

The Panthers had entered the game 21st in the league in total offense and 24th in scoring.

"We get to watch them — that's the fun part," Kuechly said of the offense.

It was a big game for Stewart, who fumbled twice in last week's 20-17 win over the Atlanta Falcons.

"He might have been play-

ing with a chip on his shoulder, but we just wanted to get him to that second level," Panthers offensive tackle Matt Kalil said.

The Dolphins have put themselves in a difficult situation in a tight AFC playoff race.

"There are pieces in the locker room. I truly believe that," Cutler said.

McCaffrey starts: The Panthers gave McCaffrey the start at running back over Stewart. McCaffrey didn't let them down, combining for 50 yards and two scores, including a nifty 4-yard touchdown run where he faked out two Miami defenders.

McDonald returns: Dolphins safety T.J. McDonald returned to the starting lineup after serving an eight-game suspension for violating the league's substance abuse policy, but it didn't help the struggling Dolphins defense.

Drake's big run: Kenyan Drake provided the big play for the Dolphins, breaking free for a 66-yard touchdown run in the third quarter.

Newton's numbers: Newton passed Dan Marino for the third-most total yards (passing and rushing) in a quarterback's first seven seasons. Newton trails only Peyton Manning and Matt Ryan in that category.

NHL roundup

Teravainen's hat trick powers Hurricanes past Stars

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Sebastian Aho made an early splash Monday night before fellow Finn Teuvo Teravainen stole the show.

Teravainen had a natural hat trick in the third period, his first three-goal game in the NHL, to lead the Carolina Hurricanes to a 5-1 victory over the Dallas Stars.

Aho added his first goal of the season and two assists, and Jordan Staal's career-best

four assists gave him 201 with the Hurricanes. Jeff Skinner scored the other Carolina goal in the closing seconds.

"I liked the fact we scored on the power play," Carolina coach Bill Peters said. "That gave us momentum. It gave us life. It was good for (Aho) to get one. The guys were happy for him. I don't know who was happier for him, collectively the team on the bench or himself."

Alexander Radulov scored for Dallas.

Carolina took the lead on a rush at 8:07 of the first period as Aho beat Ben Bishop through the legs after Staal's pinpoint centering pass from the left wing.

Radulov tied it by working hard in the slot on a power play at 8:44 of the second.

But the Hurricanes went ahead again on a power play at 2:39 of the third, with Teravainen scoring on a rocket from the left point.

Flames 7, Blues 4: Mark

Jankowski had two goals and an assist, and Kris Versteeg scored the winner with 5:31 left as host Calgary beat St. Louis.

In a wild third period, the Flames took the lead twice only to see the Blues tie it each time. Calgary finally went in front for good when Versteeg's shot off the wing beat goalie Jake Allen.

Sam Bennett scored his first of the season for Calgary, and Micheal Ferland got his fourth goal in four games.

NBA roundup

James leads Cavs' rally against Knicks

Associated Press

NEW YORK — LeBron James got shoved by the Knicks and then benched by his coach.

Neither could keep him down for good.

James had 23 points, 12 assists and nine rebounds, Kyle Korver scored 19 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter to spark a huge comeback, and the Cleveland Cavaliers beat New York 104-101 on Monday night.

James also had a technical foul after a first-quarter altercation with Frank Ntilikina and Enes Kanter, which seemed to charge up the Knicks. But he didn't lose his poise then or midway through the third quarter, when Tyronn Lue yanked the five starters with the Knicks on their way to a 23-point lead.

"I knew we had another half," James said. "Didn't know that I was going to get snatched like that early in the third, but I felt if I got back in I could still make some plays to help our

team win."

He did, hitting two of the Cavaliers' nine three-pointers in the fourth after they made just seven through three quarters and helping the Cavs charge back for their eighth straight victory at Madison Square Garden.

Cleveland outscored New York 43-25 in the fourth, making more threes than the Knicks had baskets (eight). But the turnaround started late in the third with the second unit in.

"Now we just kept talking about chipping away, chipping away," Dwyane Wade said. "And then as you saw Kyle Korver got going and then when you saw LeBron check back in, you knew, OK. You saw the waves coming."

Tim Hardaway Jr. had 28 points and 10 rebounds, and Kanter added 20 points and 16 boards. But Kristaps Porzingis shot only 7-for-21 while scoring 20 points as the Knicks blew their chance to beat the

Cavs for the second time this season.

James dunked and then wouldn't move out of the way as Ntilikina tried to take the ball back to the baseline to throw it in. Ntilikina pushed James, who then exchanged words with Kanter after he ran in. James shoved Kanter, and both were given technical fouls.

Warriors 110, Magic 100: Kevin Durant had 21 points, a season-high eight assists and seven rebounds, Shaun Livingston scored a season-best 16 points in place of injured Stephen Curry, and host Golden State pulled away in the second half to beat Orlando for its seventh straight win.

76ers 109, Clippers 105: Joel Embiid scored 32 points, Robert Covington added 31 and Philadelphia handed host Los Angeles its sixth consecutive loss.

Trail Blazers 99, Nuggets 82: CJ McCollum and Jusuf Nurkic had 17 points apiece as host Portland beat Denver to

stop a two-game skid.

Pelicans 106, Hawks 105: Darius Miller hit four three-pointers in the fourth quarter, when he scored 14 of his 21 points, and host New Orleans overcame a sloppy performance to beat struggling Atlanta.

Bucks 110, Grizzlies 103: Giannis Antetokounmpo had 27 points and nine rebounds to lead host Milwaukee over Memphis.

Lakers 100, Suns 93: Jordan Clarkson scored a season-high 25 points and Los Angeles pulled away late to beat host Phoenix.

Wizards 110, Kings 92: John Wall had 21 points and nine assists, Marcin Gortat scored 18 and host Washington defeated Sacramento for its third straight win.

Timberwolves 109, Jazz 98: Karl-Anthony Towns had 24 points and 13 rebounds, and Jimmy Butler added 21 points and 10 assists to help Minnesota get past host Utah.

Top 25 roundup

Boatwright, USC hold off North Dakota St.

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Three years ago, it was inconceivable that Bennie Boatwright wouldn't be shooting a boatload of three-pointers.

And harder to imagine that the junior scored a career-high 28 points with just one made three in 10th-ranked Southern California's 75-65 victory over North Dakota State on Monday night.

"I credit it a lot to the coaching staff and my teammates for helping me get in the gym and working on my all-around game," Boatwright said, "and not just being a three-point shooter."

The Trojans (2-0) closed the game on a 13-5 run to hold off the pesky Bison (0-2).

USC twice trailed by 10 points in the first half and was down five in the second half before rallying late. The Trojans struggled at the free throw line, going 17-for-31.

"It was just one of those nights," said USC's Jordan McLaughlin, who had 12 points and eight rebounds.

No. 8 Florida 116, Gardner-Webb 74: Graduate transfer Egor Koulechov scored 34 points, hitting six three-pointers in his Florida debut to lead the host Gators in the team's season opener.

No. 6 Wichita State 81, College of Charleston 63: Senior center Shaquille Morris had 18 points and 10 rebounds in just 22 minutes to lead host Wichita State.

No. 12 Cincinnati 102, Western Carolina 51: Sophomore Jarron Cumberland scored 20 points for the second time in his career, and Cincinnati's full-court pressure forced 22 turnovers.

No. 13 Notre Dame 88, Mount St. Mary's 62: Bonzie Colson had 27 points, 11 rebounds and three blocks while Notre Dame shook off a choppy opening half to

roll in the Irish's home opener.

No. 14 Minnesota 86, Providence 74: Jordan Murphy had 23 points and 14 rebounds, and Minnesota outlasted host Providence.

No. 15 Xavier 101, Rider 75: Trevon Bluiett had 26 points and nine rebounds to lead host Xavier to a victory over Rider in the teams' first-ever meeting.

No. 20 Northwestern 75, Saint Peter's 66: Bryant McIntosh scored 10 of his 17 points in the second half, and Northwestern held off Saint Peter's.

No. 21 Saint Mary's 92, New Mexico State 74: Emmett Naar scored 22 points, Jock Landale added 20 points and 10 rebounds, and host Saint Mary's pulled away.

No. 25 Baylor 70, Texas A&M-Corpus Christi 46: Manu Lecomte scored 23 points and host Baylor pulled away.