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'Fat Leonard' review of top Navy spy over

The San Diego Union-Tribune

SAN DIEGO — Fretting about his possible role in the "Fat Leonard" bribery scandal, in late 2013 the Navy stripped the security clearance of its top spy, destroying the career of Vice Adm. Ted "Twig" Branch.

On Friday, the Navy closed its review with what it called appropriate administrative action for Branch, the former director of Navy intelligence.

The Department of Justice — which has handled the prosecution of those who took bribes from contractor Leonard Glenn Francis and his Singapore-based Glenn Defense Marine Asia — brought no charges against Branch.

"The Department of Justice declined to prosecute Vice Adm. Ted Branch and forwarded his matter to the Department of the Navy's Consolidated Disposition Authority," said Navy Fleet Forces Command spokesman Cmdr. Mike Kafka in a written

statement. "After completing a thorough and detailed review of the evidence, the CDA took appropriate administrative action. This matter is closed."

Administrative action can include a nonpunitive letter of reprimand or an oral counseling chiding a sailor for questionable conduct. Unlike other judicial or military sanctions, administrative action cannot take pay and privileges from a shipmate.

"We are very proud of my 37 years of service in the Navy," Branch said by telephone. "The last three years were extremely difficult for my family and me, but we are glad now to turn the page. I look forward to being able to continue to serve the Navy and our nation as a civilian."

Helmed by Adm. Philip Davidson, the disposition authority has been sifting through hundreds of cases that federal prosecutors passed on. Federal investigators have uncovered

widespread instances in which Francis defrauded the Navy on contracts after lavishing officers with teams of prostitutes, pricey resort stays and envelopes stuffed with cash.

Federal prosecutors and Navy leaders have charged 40 sailors, Department of Defense civilians or Fat Leonard associates in the scandal, including Rear Adm. Bruce Loveless, the Navy's former director of intelligence operations. He has pleaded not guilty and awaits trial in federal criminal court on conspiracy, wire fraud and bribery charges.

Federal investigators grilled Branch in November 2013, forcing the Navy's leadership to make hard decisions about Branch's case, said former Navy Secretary Ray Mabus.

Mabus said by telephone that investigators assured Navy leaders in late 2013 that they had substantial evidence pointing to Branch's wrongdoing and

that they soon would make a decision on charging him.

"Obviously, both of those things weren't true," said Mabus, adding that "the way it was handled wasn't fair to Ted Branch and wasn't fair to the Navy."

Mabus and his admirals felt that they couldn't fire Branch from his intelligence post, but they also fretted that he was close to classified information and they needed to protect that. So they left him in his job but wouldn't clear him to hear or analyze intelligence data.

"As time went on, they (the Department of Justice) questioned us, 'Why aren't you replacing him?' But we were in a horrible position," Mabus said. "They made us aware of potential problems, but we had no grounds to relieve him."

Branch retired from the Navy on Oct. 1 and lives in Coronado, Calif.

Navy tech awarded Silver Star for protecting lives

BY COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A Navy explosive ordnance disposal technician received the Silver Star last week for his actions during a deadly 10-hour firefight with Islamic State militants that helped his fellow sailors navigate a minefield, the Navy announced Friday.

Petty Officer 1st Class Jeffrey Thomas exited his vehicle in the midst of the fight on Oct. 20, 2016, as bullets, rockets and mortar rounds targeted his unit. Thomas swept the area for explosives just after a roadside bomb struck another vehicle, mortally wounding a sailor, ac-

ording to the Navy. His actions allowed medics to get through the minefield and reach injured sailors to provide critical care.

"No one who was present on the 20th of October knew better than Jeff the dangers he was facing," said Navy Cmdr. Geoff Townsend, the commander of Thomas' unit, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 3. "After the EOD supervisor, a friend and mentor, was mortally wounded, Jeff knowingly exposed himself to hazards in order to protect the lives of his teammates and brothers in arms and secure a [medical evacuation] for his wounded teammate. His actions that day saved the lives of his teammates

and exceeded all measures of selflessness and devotion to his country."

Navy Adm. Bill Moran, the vice chief of naval operations, awarded Thomas the nation's third-highest honor for valor on Wednesday during a ceremony at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado in California.

The Navy's statement did not include details about the location of the firefight or identify the sailor who died as a result of the wounds that he received from the roadside bomb attack. However, the Pentagon previously announced Navy Chief Petty Officer Jason Finan, 34, was killed in action in an improvised bomb attack on his

vehicle on Oct. 20 just north of Mosul, Iraq.

Finan was an EOD technician assigned to the same unit as Thomas. The sailors were attached to a SEAL team charged with advising and assisting Iraqi security forces fighting ISIS on the march toward eventually liberating Mosul.

Two other sailors with EOD Unit 3 also were honored during the Wednesday ceremony.

Navy Lt. Morgan Dahl received the Bronze Star with "V" device for valor. Navy Senior Chief Petty Officer Jon Hamm was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with combat "C" device.

Ex-Abu Ghraib inmates' suit moves ahead

Associated Press

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — After nine years of fits and starts, dismissals and reinstatements, a federal lawsuit filed by one-time inmates at the notorious Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq against civilian interrogators who worked there is moving ahead.

"We're not dismissing this case. It's going to go forward," U.S. District Judge Leonie Brinkema said at the conclusion of a hearing Friday in U.S. District Court in Alexandria, Va. She said she'll issue a written ruling at a later date.

It's been 13 years since photos documenting abusive treatment of inmates at Abu Ghraib first became public and nine years since the lawsuit was first filed against CACI Premier Technology, which supplied civilian interrogators to the prison.

The three inmates who are

plaintiffs in the case allege the CACI interrogators directed a conspiracy in which they ordered military police to soften up the detainees for questioning with tactics that amounted to torture, including beatings, sleep deprivation, forced nudity and sexual humiliation.

The lawsuit has been dismissed multiple times, only to be reinstated each time by the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Va.

The most recent dismissal came when a judge ruled that the lawsuit involved an inherently political question and could not be settled by the judiciary because it would require a judge to question the war-making powers and policies of the executive branch.

But the appeals court ruled that CACI could not escape liability under the political questions doctrine if it acted

unlawfully at Abu Ghraib, even if CACI was carrying out the military's wishes in doing so.

Brinkema reiterated at Friday's hearing that CACI would be held responsible for unlawful conduct, even if it was carried out at the military's behest.

The Center for Constitutional Rights, which filed the lawsuit on the inmates' behalf, argues that the CACI interrogators played a key role in the abuse.

"There was a leadership vacuum" at the Abu Ghraib hard site where the abuse took place, said Robert LoBue, one of the plaintiffs' lawyers. "CACI interrogators assumed a de facto position of control. We think they set the example, set the tone."

CACI maintains it is not liable, in part because its interrogators were not the ones who inflicted the punishment on the inmates. And CACI's lawyers say they are hamstrung in de-

fending against the accusation that the company's interrogators conspired to abuse the inmates because much of the evidence in the case is classified, and the U.S. government has been unwilling to provide it.

Brinkema, though, expressed skepticism about CACI's claims that the government's intransigence is inhibiting its defense. She said she thought CACI ought to be able to account for the actions of its own interrogators without relying on government documentation.

Brinkema swept aside another major obstacle in the lawsuit earlier this year when she ordered that the Abu Ghraib plaintiffs could give depositions overseas without coming to the U.S. A previous judge had ordered the ex-inmates to come to the U.S. to give their depositions, but they were unable to obtain visas to travel here.

1st female Marine couldn't vote but was ready to serve

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The first female Marine?

Not what you may think. Yes, women served as parachute riggers and welders and eventually became drill sergeants and pilots. But the first woman to join the Marine Corps was the wife of an orchestra conductor.

Opha May Johnson, 39, joined up Aug. 13, 1918 — before she was even allowed to vote.

Almost a century later, the Marines announced Thursday a woman has passed the grueling Infantry Officer Course, long the domain of the toughest male Marines, for the first time.

This still-unidentified woman was tested for 86 days on a course that washes out 25 percent of the men who try it. She hiked for miles in the Mojave Desert and in the mountains, swam laps in all her battle rattle, carried a load of up to 152 pounds for more than 9 miles at a 3-mile-per-hour pace and came across a pile of springs, firing bolts, stocks and barrels and — on the spot — assembled them into foreign and American infantry weapons (under an undisclosed time limit) — among other horrors.

Her performance was so jaw-dropping, the Marines announced her halfway point

in August.

It was different for the first female Marine 100 years ago — she did not have to hike in the desert. She did take a man's job.

It was close to the end of World War I when the Marine Corps decided to fill some of the gaps left behind by all the men fighting overseas. In 1918, Johnson was the first of 300 women who showed up to take one of those jobs. They made headlines in newspapers all across the country.

Johnson was a rapid-fire typist.

Johnson was a graduate of the Shorthand & Typewriting department of Wood's Commercial College and was working in the Interstate Commerce Commission when the Marines issued a call for help.

She was 39 and had left Indiana to follow her husband, Victor Johnson, to Washington, where he was the musical director of the Lafayette Square Opera House.

Her new job had her clerking at the Marine Corps Headquarters in Arlington, Va. Even though they were clerks, the women had to train and drill like other Marines. Drill sergeants made their displeasure clear, calling the women "Marinettes," according to Linda L. Hewitt's book, "Women Marines in World War I."

The female Marines were not amused.

"Isn't it funny, the minute a girl becomes

a regular fellow somebody always tries to queer it by calling her something else? [...] Well, anybody that calls me anything but 'Marine' is going to hear from me," one of the female Marines wrote in a letter in Hewitt's book.

The women were all in. Their time in the Marines was brief. After the end of World War I, all of the military branches began disenrolling the women who signed up, a pattern repeated in World War II. Johnson was let go in 1919.

During all her years in the nation's capital, she remained active in the first American Legion post dedicated to women. For decades, she met with new veterans, supporting women as their roles grew more prominent in the military.

She lived long enough to see Capt. Anne Lentz become the first female commissioned officer, to see women raising the colors at the Marine barracks, to see Staff Sgt. Barbara Olive Barnwell become the first female Marine to be awarded the Navy and Marine Corps medal for heroism for saving a fellow Marine from drowning in the Atlantic Ocean in 1952.

Johnson died Aug. 11, 1955, and was buried in Rock Creek Cemetery on Aug. 13 — 37 years to the day when she made Marine Corps history by signing that dotted line.

Puerto Rico's storm crisis grows

Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — A humanitarian crisis grew Saturday in Puerto Rico as towns were left without fresh water, fuel, power or phone service following Hurricane Maria's devastating passage across the island.

A group of anxious mayors arrived in the capital to meet with Gov. Ricardo Rossello to present a long list of items they urgently need. The north coastal town of Manati had run out of fuel and fresh water, Mayor Jose Sanchez Gonzalez said.

The death toll from Maria stood at seven after a body found in a river was reported Saturday, and the toll was likely to rise.

Authorities in the town of Vega Alta on the north coast said they had been unable to reach an entire neighborhood called Fatima, and were particularly worried about residents of a nursing home.

"I need to get there today," Mayor Oscar Santiago told The Associated Press. "Not tomorrow, today."

Federal officials said a dam upstream of the towns of Quebradillas and Isabela in northwest Puerto Rico was cracked but had not burst by Saturday afternoon. Video from a helicopter flight showed water pouring from the Guajataca Dam. Federal officials said Friday that 70,000 people were being evacuated, but Javier Jimenez, mayor of the town of San Sebastian, said he believed the number was far smaller.

He said only several hundred families were told to leave the banks of the Guajataca River. San Sebastian is to the west of the dam and outside the worst flood zone.

The discrepancy could not immediately be explained.

The 345-yard dam, which was built around 1928, holds back a man-made lake covering about 2 square miles. More than 15 inches of rain from Maria fell on the surrounding mountains, swelling the reservoir.

An engineer inspecting the dam reported a "contained breach" that officials quickly realized was a crack that could

be the first sign of total failure of the dam, U.S. National Weather Service meteorologist Anthony Reynes said.

Officials said 1,360 of the island's 1,600 cellphone towers were downed, and 85 percent of above-ground and underground phone and internet cables were knocked out. With roads blocked and phones dead, officials said, the situation may worsen.

Maj. Gen. Derek P. Rydholm, deputy to the chief of the Air Force Reserve, said mobile communications systems were being flown in, but acknowledged "it's going to take a while" before people in Puerto Rico will be able to communicate with their families outside the island.

Rosello said he was distributing 250 satellite phones from FEMA to mayors across the island to re-establish contact.

At least 28 lives in all have been lost around the Caribbean, including at least 15 on hard-hit Dominica. Haiti reported three deaths; Guadeloupe, two; and the Dominican Republic, one.

McCain doesn't back GOP health care bill

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Sen. John McCain declared his opposition Friday to the GOP's last-ditch effort to repeal and replace "Obamacare," dealing a likely death blow to the legislation and, perhaps, to the Republican Party's years of vows to kill the program. It was the second time in three months McCain emerged as the destroyer of his party's signature promise to voters.

"I believe we could do better working together, Republicans and Democrats, and have not yet really tried," McCain said of the bill, co-written by Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., his best friend in the Senate, and Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-La. "Nor could I support it without knowing how much it will cost, how it will affect insurance premiums, and how many people will be helped or hurt by it."

McCain, 81, who is battling brain cancer in the twilight of a remarkable career, said he could not "in good conscience" vote for the legislation. That all but ensured a major setback for President Donald Trump and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and appeared likely to deepen rifts between congressional Republicans and a president who has begun making deals with Democrats out of frustration with his own party's failure to turn proposals into laws.

With the Arizona senator's defection, there are now two declared GOP "no" votes on the repeal legislation, the other being Rand Paul of Kentucky. With Democrats unanimously opposed, that's the exact number McConnell can afford to lose. But Maine GOP Sen. Susan Collins said Friday she, too, is leaning against the bill, and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska also was a possible "no," making it highly unlikely that McConnell can prevail.

NFL head, players' union rip Trump; NBA champs' invitations withdrawn

Associated Press

SOMERSET, N.J. — The National Football League and its players' union on Saturday angrily denounced President Donald Trump for suggesting that owners fire players who kneel during the national anthem and that fans consider walking out in protest "when somebody disrespects our flag."

"Divisive comments like these demonstrate an unfortunate lack of respect for the NFL, our great game and all of our players," the league commissioner, Roger Goodell, said in a statement.

DeMaurice Smith, executive director of the NFL Players Association, tweeted: "We will never back down. We no longer can afford to stick to sports."

Smith said the union won't

shy away from "protecting the constitutional rights of our players as citizens as well as their safety as men who compete in a game that exposes them to great risks."

Trump kept up his foray into the sports world on Saturday, when he responded to comments by Stephen Curry of the Golden State Warriors, who has made it clear that he's not interested in a traditional White House trip for the NBA champions.

"Going to the White House is considered a great honor for a championship team. Stephen Curry is hesitating, therefore invitation is withdrawn!" Trump tweeted while spending the weekend at his golf club in New Jersey.

It was not immediately clear whether Trump was rescind-

ing the invitation for Curry or the entire team.

Several athletes, including a handful of NFL players, have refused to stand during "The Star-Spangled Banner" to protest of the treatment of blacks by police.

Trump, who once owned the New Jersey Generals of the United States Football League, said those players are disrespecting the American flag and deserve to lose their jobs.

The players' union said in a statement that "no man or woman should ever have to choose a job that forces them to surrender their rights. No worker nor any athlete, professional or not, should be forced to become less than human when it comes to protecting their basic health and safety."

Hackers target 21 states' election systems

Associated Press

The federal government on Friday told election officials in 21 states that hackers targeted their systems before last year's presidential election.

The notification came roughly a year after Department of Homeland Security officials first said states were targeted by hacking efforts possibly connected to Russia. The states that told The Associated Press they had been targeted included political battlegrounds, such as Florida, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Wisconsin.

The AP confirmed Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Minnesota, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas and Wash-

ington had also been notified.

Being targeted does not mean sensitive voter data was manipulated or results were changed. A hacker targeting a system is similar to a burglar circling a house checking for unlocked doors and windows.

Even so, the widespread nature of the attempts and the yearlong lag time in notification raised concerns among some election officials and lawmakers.

For many states, the Friday calls were the first official confirmation their states were on the list—even though state election officials across the country have been calling for months for the federal government to share information about any hacks.

The government did not say

who was behind the hacking attempts or provide details about what had been sought. But election officials in several states said the attempts were linked to Russia.

The Wisconsin Election Commission said the state's systems were targeted by "Russian government cyber actors." Alaska Elections Division Director Josie Bahnke said computers in Russia were scanning election systems looking for vulnerabilities.

Federal officials said that in most of the 21 states, the targeting was preparatory activity.

The targets included voter registration systems but not vote tallying software. Officials said there were some attempts to compromise networks but

most were unsuccessful. Only Illinois reported that hackers had succeeded in breaching its voter systems.

Colorado said the hacking wasn't quite a breach.

"It's really reconnaissance by a bad guy to try and figure out how we would break into your computer," said Trevor Timmons, a spokesman for the Colorado secretary of state's office.

Earlier this year, a leaked National Security Agency report detailed that hackers obtained information from a company that provided software to manage voter registrations in eight states. The May report said hackers sent phishing emails to 122 local election officials just before the November 2016 election in an attempt to break into their systems.

S. Korea: Quake detected in North

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea's weather agency said a magnitude 3.2 earthquake was detected in North Korea on Saturday close to where the country recently conducted a nuclear test, but it assessed the quake as natural.

The quake was detected in an area around Kilju, in northeastern North Korea, just 3.7 miles northwest of where the North conducted its sixth and most powerful nuclear test on Sept. 3, according to an official from Seoul's Korea Meteorological Administration.

The area isn't where natural earthquakes normally occur. A South Korean expert said the quake could have been caused by geological stress created from the recent nuclear explosion. Other possible causes include landslides or the collapsing of test structures such as tunnels, said Hong Tae-kyung, a professor at the department of Earth System Sciences at Yonsei University.

"It could be a natural earthquake that really was man-made as the nuclear test would have transferred a lot of stress," he said. "The quake is small enough to suspect that it could have been caused by a tunnel collapse, and satellite data shows there have been many landslides in the area since the nuclear test."

China's official Xinhua News Agency said the country's seismic service detected a magnitude 3.4 quake in North Korea and

saw the likely cause as an explosion. But the South Korean weather agency official said the analysis of seismic waves and the lack of sound waves clearly showed that the quake wasn't caused by an artificial explosion. She spoke on condition of anonymity, citing office rules.

The U.S. Geological Survey said that it detected a magnitude 3.5 quake in the area of previous North Korean nuclear tests, but that it was unable to confirm whether the event was natural.

North Korea's weakest nuclear test, its first one, conducted in 2006, generated a magnitude 4.3 quake.

The USGS measured this month's nuclear test at magnitude 6.3. The latest test was followed by a second magnitude 4.1 quake that experts said could have been caused by landslides or a tunnel collapsing after the explosion.

Analysts examining satellite images of North Korea's mountainous test site after the latest nuclear test said they spotted landslides and surface disturbances that were more numerous and widespread than what was seen from any of the five previous tests.

North Korea said its recent nuclear test was a detonation of a thermonuclear weapon built for its developmental intercontinental ballistic missiles. In two July flight tests, those missiles showed potential capability to reach deep into the U.S. mainland when perfected.

Another temblor shakes Mexico

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — A strong new earthquake shook Mexico on Saturday, causing new alarm in a country reeling from two yet-more-powerful quakes this month that have killed nearly 400 people.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the new, magnitude 6.1 temblor was centered about 11 miles south-southeast of Matias Romero in the state of Oaxaca, which was the region most battered by a magnitude 8.1 quake on Sept. 7. It was among thousands of aftershocks recorded in the wake of that earlier quake, the most powerful to hit Mexico in 32 years, which killed at least 90 people.

There were some early reports of damage in Oaxaca. Milenio TV broadcast images of a bridge that partially collapsed.

Bettina Cruz, a resident of Juchitan, Oaxaca, said by phone with her voice still shaking that the new quake felt "horrible."

"Homes that were still standing just fell down," Cruz said. "It's hard. We are all in the streets."

Nataniel Hernandez said by phone from Tonala, in the southern state of Chiapas, which was also hit hard by the earlier quake, that it was one of the strongest movements he has felt since then.

U.S. Geological Survey geophysicist Paul Caruso said the new temblor was an aftershock of the 8.1 quake, and after a jolt of that size, even buildings left standing can be more vulnerable.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Defiant woman won't remove Trump signs

ME ROCKLAND — A Maine woman said she'd rather go to jail than take down her pro-Donald Trump signs.

The code enforcement officer in Rockland has notified Susan Reitman that her signs that say "I Love Trump" and "He Won, Get over it," violate a local ordinance. She could be fined between \$100 or more per day because the signs are bigger than the town allows.

Town officials say there's a process to apply for permits to display larger signs.

Reitman told New England Cable News her free speech rights trump any local ordinance. And she says she has no intention of removing her signs — or paying any fines.

Shop owner fires shot, gets stolen beer back

FL COCOA — Police said a Florida gas station owner chased a man and fired a warning shot, forcing him to return some stolen beer.

Orlando TV station WESH reported it was the fourth time store owner Sowann Suy used his gun in defense of his store. Suy, who's dubbed "Clint Eastwood" by friends, told the station he fired the shot Wednesday after the man took the beers and threatened to beat him up.

Records show Suy shot a suspect in the stomach at the store in 2009 and chased off another suspected robber the following year. In 2016, Suy wounded one man and two others were arrested during a botched robbery.

Cocoa police spokeswoman Barbara Matthews said Suy has "a perfect right to defend himself."

Council member gives opponent ABC gum

MN MINNEAPOLIS — A Minneapolis City Council member has given one of her opponents something to chew over — a piece of chewed gum.

Twenty-year incumbent Lisa Goodman took the gum out of her mouth and handed it to challenger Teqen Zea-Aida before the start of a candidate forum Tuesday.

Goodman asked Zea-Aida: "Would you take my gum, please?"

Goodman told the Star Tribune she couldn't find any paper to get rid of her gum and was just making a lighthearted comment.

Goodman said the challenger "looked at me like I was crazy," and she took the gum back out of his hand. The council member said it was "a simple attempt to humor" and apologized.

Cops: Girl, 8, helps drive drunken man

PA DARLINGTON — Police said a drunken Pennsylvania man had an 8-year-old girl drive him around until someone saw the car moving recklessly and called 911.

WPXI-TV reported the bizarre incident involving Kevin Cook, 24, happened on Sept. 3 in Darlington Township, Beaver County.

That's where, according to a criminal complaint, someone reported seeing the child driving and almost wrecking the car twice at about 7:30 p.m.

Police said the girl stopped the car when another motorist became upset and got out of his car, yelling at her and Cook. That's when the girl told police Cook made her switch seats, so he could get behind the wheel before police arrived.

Students use donated moose to make lunch

AK HAINES — Students at Haines High School thought dressing in camouflage last week was just a part of spirit week, but the hunter's attire was fitting when a moose carcass was delivered to the school's lunch program.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game officials were forced to euthanize a moose Tuesday when a vehicle likely struck it, KTUU-TV reported.

Authorities gave the moose to the school district's food service coordinator, Brandie Stickler, who then gutted, skinned, quartered and kept it cool until the next day, when juniors and seniors processed the meat under her supervision.

Rene Martin, the school's principal, said school meals made with the moose meat included moose stew, moose tacos, moose burgers and moose spaghetti sauce.

City's buses will be listening to passengers

NV RENO — A federal judge has given northern Nevada's largest public transit system the green light to begin recording audio along with the video surveillance on city buses in Reno despite objections from the bus drivers' union that says it's an illegal invasion of privacy.

A lawyer for the Teamsters told The Associated Press they intend to appeal.

Judge Miranda Du said in a ruling last week neither the Washoe County bus drivers nor their passengers have a right to privacy because conversations on public buses are not private.

Du said there's nothing clandestine about it because posted signs warn riders buses may be equipped with audio and video surveillance.

Sheriff: Don't call 911 for Halloween display

TN GREENEVILLE — A Tennessee sheriff's office is asking people not to call about a "body" trapped under a closed, blood-stained garage door.

That's because the scene at a home in Greene County isn't real; it's an early Halloween display.

The Green County Sheriff's Department said it has been inundated with so many calls about the lifelike display that it posted a message Wednesday on the agency's Facebook page to let people know it's not real.

"Do NOT call 911 reporting a dead body," said the post, which includes a photo. "Instead, congratulate the homeowner on a great display."

Homeowner Joseph Lovergive told WJHL-TV that his family loves Halloween and always decorates early.

Storm topples Apollo mission 'Moon Tree'

FL CAPE CANAVERAL — Winds from Hurricane Irma toppled a tiny tree that orbited the moon and later grew at the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex in Florida.

Florida Today reported the sycamore tree, also known as a "Moon Tree," was toppled by hurricane winds.

In 1971, hundreds of tree seeds were carried into space by Apollo 14 astronaut Stuart Roosa. When the Apollo 14 returned to Earth, a mishap caused them to mix. They were deemed unusable for experiments but were grown anyway.

A NASA report said hundreds of the trees were planted across the country to celebrate the nation's 200th birthday, though all their locations weren't properly documented.

From wire reports

Your objective source for military news
updated 24/7 from bases
around the world.
Now online at www.stripes.com.

STARS AND STRIPES®

NFL scouts have eyes on Wyoming QB

Associated Press

LARAMIE, Wyo. — The stands of War Memorial Stadium are mostly empty as Josh Allen makes his way toward midfield, ball in hand.

Allen is wearing a T-shirt, brown baggy basketball shorts and headphones. Wyoming's game against Oregon is still about 90 minutes away, but the show is about to start. Representatives from 16 NFL teams are gathered on the sideline to see one of the most intriguing quarterback prospects in the country, and he doesn't disappoint. He's big, but nimble, and the ball explodes from his hand effortlessly.

He looks like a natural, only there's a problem.

This will end up being the best part of Allen's day. During the game, he took a beating and completed just six passes.

Allen is a fascinating case study of the NFL evaluation process. He is a rare physical talent, but his teammates have been overmatched by top-notch competition. As a result, so has he. While some fans look at Allen's underwhelming stats against Power Five competition and proclaim: 'OV-ER-RATED!' scouts are digging deeper. A player's draft stock does rise and fall from week to week. In the long run, how Allen deals with failure could be more valuable to him than if he had thrown four touchdown passes against the Ducks.

"Everything is not black and white," former NFL general manager and Pro Football Hall of Famer Bill Polian said. "What goes on this season is important. You're going to want to watch the tape. You're going to want to watch his team live. You're going to want to see how he handles adversity. You want to see how he performs with a lesser team around him than he had last year.

"All of that is part of the equation."

When it comes to dealing with adversity, Allen has already overcome so much. He

was a zero-star high schooler who grew up on his parents' ranch in Firebaugh, Calif., about 40 miles northeast of Fresno. He was not a product of the quarterback industrial complex. He did not receive hours of private coaching as a teenager or play seven-on-seven tournaments year-round.

"I would say this is a benefit to him because he's emerged as a legitimate candidate without all the bells and whistles that are attached to all of the formal training that goes on now with these quarterbacks," said former NFL general manager Phil Savage, who is executive director of the Senior Bowl.

Not forever

Allen played baseball and basketball in high school. He also swam and learned karate as a kid. He worked on the ranch, attending to the cantaloupe, wheat and cotton. From that he learned "you don't want to do it for the rest of your life."

He landed at Reedley College, a junior college in central California, and there the long, lanky kid began to fill out. Wyoming coach Craig Bohl and offensive coordinator Brent Vigen — who at FCS power North Dakota State developed Carson Wentz from a no-star to the second-overall NFL Draft pick — came across Allen while looking into a lineman at Reedley.

As Allen grew to 6-foot-5, 230 pounds, the buzz started. His first chance to impress on a big stage was at Nebraska last season, and he threw five interceptions. He went on to help the Cowboys reach the Mountain West championship game. He considered entering the NFL Draft last season, but stayed after being advised he would benefit from another year of development, gaining a better understanding of what it takes to play quarterback at the highest level.

"I think his ability to understand the game, understand preparation, attention to detail. Really, truly, being consumed by that part of it is still a work

in progress," Vigen said. "I think that's part of his maturity and part of the reason his coming back will be so beneficial to him."

The team Allen returned to, though, is depleted. Star running back Brian Hill was drafted in the fifth round by the Falcons, and center Chase Roullier was a sixth-round pick by the Redskins. The Cowboys' three leading receivers from 2016 are gone. Both wide receiver Tanner Gentry and tight end Jacob Hollister made NFL rosters out of training camp.

But because of Allen, who had been hyped as a possible first-round draft pick all summer, expectations for the Cowboys were still high. Reality set in when Wyoming was beaten 24-3 in the opener at Iowa and Allen threw for 174 yards and two interceptions.

"Of course it would have helped him (to play well against Iowa), but I didn't expect that," said former NFL scout Chris Landry of LandryFootball.com. "Those ends at Iowa really just torched (Wyoming)."

Gifts on display

Still, there were moments when Allen's gifts were on display.

"Third down, rips an absolute freakin' dime on a rope 45 yards, hits the guy on the facemask. Incomplete," said former NFL quarterback Trent Dilfer, who works with the Elite 11 quarterback competition for top high school prospects.

Then came Oregon last weekend, and it got even worse. The Ducks were all over Allen and he went 6-for-24 for 64 yards with an interception and two fumbles in the 49-13 loss.

ESPN draft analyst Todd McShay said watching the Oregon film, he counted five dropped passes in Wyoming's first 26 plays.

"He's getting pressured, not every time, but just about I'd say 70 percent of his drop backs, he's either getting pressure early — before 2½ seconds — or his receivers aren't separating so he's forced to hold

the ball and move and avoid pressure and then try to reset and throw. Or throw on the run while a defender is closing in on him," McShay said. "What are you supposed to do?"

Well, first off, Allen deleted Twitter from his phone after the Oregon game.

"Those guys on Twitter aren't making draft picks and putting together teams in the NFL," he said. "All I really care about is respect from my teammates and my coaches here."

What Allen also did was try not to show frustration on the sideline and to keep encouraging his teammates. On the Monday after facing Oregon, he acknowledged it was a rocky day, vowed to play better and expressed confidence that the team will improve.

"We have a saying in our family," Josh's father, Joel Allen, said. "It's APO. Adjust. Persevere. Overcome. And apply that to just about everything you do."

The quarterback class for the next NFL Draft has a chance to be exceptionally strong, with UCLA's Josh Rosen and USC's Sam Darnold likely to enter. Dilfer said that could be to Allen's benefit.

"We have over-drafted quarterbacks the last few years," Dilfer said.

Evaluators generally agree that Allen is physically ahead of Wentz, who blew away NFL executives with his competitive character, leadership skills and willingness and capacity to learn.

Those traits usually make or break quarterbacks in the NFL. That part of evaluating Allen is incomplete, but will have a far greater effect on where he will be drafted than his stats against Oregon. Faking those traits is more difficult when times are tough.

"And I hope people see that I'm going to be battle-tested," Allen said "I'm going to be put through the ringer. Mentally, physically, whatever the case may be, it's going to make me a better quarterback."

College football roundup

Utah survives close battle with Arizona

Associated Press

TUCSON, Ariz. — When Utah quarterback Tyler Huntley went down with a shoulder injury in the second quarter, the Utes had an experienced and reliable alternative ready.

Troy Williams, a senior who started 13 games last season, came on and guided the No. 23 Utes to a 30-24 victory over Arizona on Friday night in the Pac-12 opener for both schools.

“We’re in a good place quarterback-wise,” Utah coach Kyle Whittingham said. “Obviously we want Tyler back as soon as possible, but Troy won nine games for us last year, and he was ready.”

Not that it was easy.

Chris Hart recovered Arizona quarterback Brandon Dawkins’ fumble at Utah’s 20-yard line with 2:33 left to preserve the victory.

Wildcats coach Rich Rodriguez didn’t think it was a fumble.

But, Dawkins said, “You’ve got to go with what the refs call and that’s what they called. I shouldn’t have made it close. I should have held the ball a little

tighter and not let them get a late strip there. So that’s on me, regardless.”

Utah (4-0) led throughout and was up 30-17 late in the fourth quarter, but Dawkins threw a 30-yard TD pass to Tony Ellison with 2:44 to play, cutting the lead to six. The subsequent onside kick attempt bounced downfield, and Arizona’s Shawn Poindexter recovered at the Utes’ 35.

On the next play, Dawkins ran 15 yards to the 20 but fumbled, and Hart recovered.

The Wildcats (2-2) committed five turnovers, including three interceptions by Dawkins.

Utah scored a touchdown on its first possession, and then Arizona twice cut the lead to three — the last time at 20-17 on J.J. Taylor’s 7-yard TD run with 4:38 left in the third quarter.

But 2½ minutes later, with Arizona deep in its own territory, Dawkins threw short over the middle and Javelin Guidry intercepted, returning it 14 yards for a touchdown that made it 27-17.

Huntley completed 8 of 9 passes for 98 yards before he

left with an injured shoulder after being sacked by Tony Fields with 8:45 left in the half.

Taylor fumbled at Utah’s 1-yard line in the second quarter, and the Utes drove all the way to the Wildcats 8. Six plays into the long drive, Huntley was injured and Williams took over. On his first play, Williams connected on a 40-yard pass to Darren Carrington, helping to set up one of Matt Gay’s three field goals, this one from 26 yards, to put the Utes up 13-3 with 5:39 left in the half.

“I prepare like I’m the starter every week,” Williams said. “I’m working hard every day. When my number is called I make sure I’m ready to go in. (The play) got me into things. Got me in a groove a little bit. I wanted to play smart football. I didn’t want to force anything.”

Utah grabbed a quick 7-0 lead on its first possession with a six-play, 73-yard scoring drive. Huntley threw 8 yards to Samson Nacua for the touchdown.

After Gay’s second field goal, Arizona answered. Wide receiver Shun Brown gained 22 yards on an end around to ignite an 11-play, 75-yard drive.

Dawkins scored from 1 yard out, and Utah’s lead was down to 13-10 at the half.

In the third quarter, Williams passed 37 yards to Demari Simpkins to the Arizona 2 to set up Sunia Tauteoli’s 1-yard touchdown run, stretching Utah’s lead to 20-10 with 9:46 left in the quarter.

A targeting penalty on Utah safety Marquise Blair against Dawkins led to Taylor’s 7-yard touchdown run that made it a three-point game again, 20-17, with 4:38 still to go in the third. Blair was ejected and also must sit out the first half of Utah’s Sept. 7 game against Stanford.

Virginia 42, Boise State 23: Kurt Benkert threw for 273 yards and three touchdowns to help the Cavaliers hand the Broncos their worst home loss since 2001.

Virginia (3-1) notched its first win west of the Mississippi River since 1991 when it beat BYU 45-40. In avenging an embarrassing 56-14 loss to Boise State in 2015, the Cavaliers also surpassed their win total from last season.

Fearlessness a family trait for Syracuse’s Dungey

Associated Press

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — Anyone who has seen junior quarterback Eric Dungey, of the Syracuse Orange, play knows he has a good set of wheels, able to leap defenders with a single bound.

Ditto for cousin Ryan, a motocross champion whose two wheels allow him to jump over anything and everything in his way.

Different sports, singular trait — fearlessness.

“Toughness definitely is a shared trait,” said Eric’s mother, Cindy. “Ryan has broken so many bones!”

Dubbed “boss of the cross,” Ryan Dungey had won every title in his sport by the time

he turned 24 — Lites Supercross Championship and titles in both the 250cc and 450cc classes. Only one other rider in history had accomplished the feat at a younger age. He also was the first motocross rider to appear on a box of Wheaties, the first to win the 450cc Supercross and outdoor titles as a rookie (2010), and finished on the podium 69 times in 75 career outdoor starts.

Then there’s this — despite breaking at least 10 bones in his career, Ryan never missed a moto.

“He’s a real tough guy,” Eric said. “When I was younger, he definitely was a role model. I would always look up to him.”

So it should come as little surprise that Eric, who has a

history of jumping, diving and flipping off cliffs and bridges, has faced more than his fair share of vicious hits with his daring style of play. He was sidelined for the better part of eight games in his first two seasons at the helm of the Orange offense because of injuries.

“I think it (toughness) is one of the most important attributes you can have to be a leader,” he said. “I just kind of lead by example. I take pride in that. It’s kind of the way I was raised.”

Since he became the starter at Syracuse his freshman year at a wiry 6-foot-4 and 200 pounds, Eric, a dual threat with deceptive speed, has paid dearly. Two players have been ejected for targeting fouls committed against him, the first

coming against Central Michigan in just his second start and resulting in a concussion.

Nonetheless, Dungey has accumulated some impressive numbers as the Orange (2-1) get set to play at No. 25 LSU on Saturday night. In 20 games he’s thrown for 4,764 yards and 31 TDs and rushed 255 times for 853 yards and 15 scores, the latter figure just four shy of the school record shared by Donovan McNabb and Bill Hurley.

“Ever since the first day, I knew that he was something special,” Orange wide receiver Steve Ishmael said of Dungey. “He was confident, wasn’t nervous. He came in there yelling. I was sort of scared myself when he started yelling. I love the kid.”

Ryan Goins delays Yankees' playoff berth

Associated Press

TORONTO — Ryan Goins made Todd Frazier pay for what the New York Yankees infielder admitted was a “bonehead” blunder, then hit a big home run for the Toronto Blue Jays.

Goins successfully pulled off a hidden-ball trick and hit his second career grand slam, leading the Blue Jays over Masahiro Tanaka 8-1 Friday night and ensuring New York had to wait at least one more day to clinch a playoff berth.

With Frazier on base following a leadoff double in the third, Jose Bautista made a running catch just in front of the right field warning track on Jacoby Ellsbury's one-out drive. Goins caught Bautista's throw while standing near second base, then pretended to toss the ball to pitcher Marco

Estrada while slipping it into his glove.

“Something told me just to do it,” Goins said. “Honestly, it was more to mess around. When it ends up working out, all you can do is smile.”

Goins turned his back to Frazier, who had returned to the base, and when Frazier briefly lifted his left foot off the base, Goins tagged him on the left thigh. Frazier insisted he had maintained contact with the base, but umpire Mark Carlson called him out to end the inning.

“Bonehead play by me,” Frazier said. “I thought the ball was thrown in.”

New York dropped four games behind AL East-leading Boston with nine games left, and the Yankees' lead over Minnesota for the top AL wild card was cut to 5½ games. The

Yankees would clinch a post-season berth with one more win or one loss by both the Los Angeles Angels and Texas.

“We know we have a really good shot at making the playoffs, of course, but we still have an opportunity to win the division, so I think our mindset is still on that,” Frazier said.

Frazier's gaffe denied Aaron Judge the chance to hit with a runner in scoring position.

“It could have changed the game. If I stay on the base, we've got Judge up and you never know what happens,” Frazier said. “Everything changed from there.”

Yankees manager Joe Girardi was displeased with Frazier's mistake and a first-inning fielding error by second baseman Starlin Castro that led to Toronto's opening run.

“Those things can't hap-

pen,” Girardi said. “We need to clean that up.”

Goins, Russell Martin and Teoscar Hernandez homered off Tanaka (12-12), who has allowed 35 home runs, one behind major league leader John Lackey of the Chicago Cubs.

“For whatever reason he's been inconsistent this year,” Girardi said of Tanaka.

Tanaka gave up eight runs — seven earned — six hits and three walks in 5 2/3 innings, raising his ERA to 4.94. Tanaka has allowed seven earned runs five times this season, including twice in his last three starts.

“It's very disappointing,” Tanaka said through a translator. “We're here toward the end of the season and I understand how important these games are. You want to go out there and perform.”

MLB roundup

Dodgers wrap up 5th straight NL West championship

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The Los Angeles Dodgers clinched their fifth straight NL West title, beating the San Francisco Giants 4-2 on Friday night as Cody Bellinger set an NL rookie record with his 39th home run.

Los Angeles will open the NL Division Series at home on Oct. 6. The Dodgers are seeking to reach the World Series for the first time since 1988 under manager Tommy Lasorda, who was on hand at Dodger Stadium to celebrate his 90th birthday.

Bellinger hit a three-run homer in the third off Jeff Samardzija (9-15), topping the NL rookie mark set by Wally Berger in 1930 and matched by Frank Robinson in 1956.

After a record run that saw the Dodgers push their record to 91-36, they had gone just 6-20 — including a dismal 1-16 stretch — to make clinching

their division more laborious than anticipated. Los Angeles stopped a nine-game home losing streak.

Rich Hill (11-8) allowed one run and five hits in six innings with ninth strikeouts.

Cubs 5, Brewers 4 (10): Pinch-hitter Tommy La Stella drew a bases-loaded walk off All-Star closer Corey Knebel with one out in the 10th inning, helping visiting Chicago beat Milwaukee to tighten its grip on the NL Central.

Mariners 3, Indians 1: Nelson Cruz hit a game-ending two-run homer in the ninth inning, lifting host Seattle over Cleveland.

Cardinals 4, Pirates 3: Randal Grichuk scored after an error by shortstop Jordy Mercer, capping a frantic ninth rally that lifted surging St. Louis over host Pittsburgh.

Rockies 4, Padres 1: Nolan Arenado ended his team's scoreless streak at 23 innings

with a solo homer, and visiting Colorado beat San Diego.

Astros 3, Angels 0: Justin Verlander (14-8) pitched one-hit ball over seven innings to remain perfect with his new team and Yuli Gurriel hit a three-run homer to propel host Houston past Los Angeles.

Diamondbacks 13, Marlins 11: Chris Iannetta homered twice and drove in a career-high eight runs, and host Arizona outslugged Miami.

Twins 7, Tigers 3: Max Kepler and Brian Dozier homered, Byron Buxton had three hits and playoff-chasing Minnesota beat host Detroit.

Athletics 4, Rangers 1: Rookie Matt Olson hit his sixth home run in seven games, a second-inning drive off Nick Martinez (3-7) that helped host Oakland damage Texas' playoff hopes.

Red Sox 5, Reds 4: Rafael Devers hit a three-run homer and visiting Boston extended

its AL East lead to four games by overcoming Scooter Gennett's fourth grand slam of the season.

Mets 7, Nationals 6: Travis d'Arnaud hit two home runs and host New York ended a three-game skid, rallying past a watered-down Washington lineup.

White Sox 7, Royals 6: Matt Davidson drove in three runs with his 26th homer and a double, Yoan Moncada hit a two-run drive and host Chicago overcame a four-run deficit to beat Kansas City.

Rays 8, Orioles 3: Wilson Ramos hit his third career grand slam, Evan Longoria also went deep and visiting Tampa Bay throttled Baltimore.

Braves 7, Phillies 2: Kurt Suzuki homered twice, Nick Markakis drove in three runs and host Atlanta beat Philadelphia.