From: Office Press Sec Press
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Readers should note that the Morning Report and Weekend Notes provide a daily sample of independent news reporting about the Air Force and Space Force, and that inclusion of an article does not mean that its content is a completely accurate statement of facts or official policy.

OP NOTE

• U.S. Responds to Iranian Attacks: U.S. forces launched strikes against Iran Wednesday night in response to an attack by Iranian forces against a U.S. base in Jordan on Tuesday (Article 1). U.S. Central Command officials said the strikes targeted drones of Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps sites, including coastal and maritime sites, missile and drone facilities, and command and control centers. President Donald Trump ordered a pause in strikes over the weekend to attempt diplomatic negotiations and to reduce the risk of a wider regional conflict.
• Pacific Air Forces Announces Pacific Resolute Force 2027 exercise: Pacific Air Forces announced on July 17 that it will conduct its annual Pacific Resolute Force exercise in 2027 to support operations in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, PACAF Commander Lt. Gen. Kevin Schneider said Monday (Article 5). Schneider said PACAF is going to be a "audience-gainer," and that the command plans to expand the Resolute Force Pacific 2027 exercise.
• Space Force Announces NSSL Tranche: Space Systems Command announced a $1.6 billion contract with SpaceX for two National Security Space Launch Phase 3 Lane 1 task orders on Wednesday (Article 11). The task orders cover launches for the Space Based Sensing and Targeting portfolio acquisition executive office, which manages the Space-Based Airborne Moving Target Indicator program.

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JOINT NEWS
1. US military launches strikes on Iran in retaliation for attacks on US base in Jordan
(The Hill, 29 Jul 26) ... Filip Timofejev
U.S. military forces launched retaliatory strikes against Iran Wednesday night in response to an attack by Iranian forces against a U.S. base in Jordan on Tuesday. U.S. Central Command officials said the strikes targeted drones of Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps sites, including coastal and maritime sites, missile and drone facilities, and command and control centers. President Donald Trump ordered a pause in strikes over the weekend to attempt diplomatic negotiations and to reduce the risk of a wider regional conflict.

2. The U.S. commander with a two-week plan to escalate strikes in Iran

(Wall Street Journal, 29 Jul 26) ... Michael R. Gordan, Lara Seligman and Aaron Lindsay
Navy Adm. Brad Cooper, the commander of U.S. Central Command, has advocated for a "go big" approach to U.S. military operations against Iran, with intensifying airstrikes to blind Iran's missile and drone threat, according to U.S. officials who spoke on background. Cooper has said he believes a stronger offensive would reduce the demand for defensive munitions because Iran would have a reduced capability to strike at targets in the region. In a statement, Chief Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said Cooper, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Dan Caine "stand completely aligned and are united in mission, strategy and resolve" regarding U.S. operations in Iran. Critics of the "go big" strategy warn that it could drag the United States deeper into an unremarkable conflict without significantly degrading Iran's missile and drone capabilities.

3. US military may require some troops in Mideast to surrender cell phones, sources say
(Reuters, 29 Jul 26) ... Phil Stewart
U.S. Central Command leaders could direct troops in increasing numbers to surrender their phones, having warned service members that videos shared online could help Iran target U.S. bases in the Persian Gulf region, according to a memorandum from CENTCOM Commander Adm. Brad Cooper signed Wednesday. "The direct, unavoidable cost of this open-source intelligence could be assessed as the loss of American service members and civilian residents in targeted Gulf countries," Cooper wrote, calling on deployed service members to "redouble our focus on operational security." Footage captured by a service member's Meta-smart glasses on July 17 and posted to social media appeared to show damage from an Iranian attack on Minaflig Safe Air Base, Jordan, including the location of a bunker on base. "Detailed lists, descriptions, and analyses of what was hit, openly published by news outlets, are essentially performing Iran's Battle Damage Assessment (BDA) for them, free of charge," Cooper wrote. Navy Capt. Tim Hawkins, a spokesperson for CENTCOM, said the memo "is a general reminder to our service members on the importance of maintaining operational security. This is one of many opportunities Admiral Cooper has used to convey operational priorities."

4. Military heatstroke cases still on the rise as crisis peak tools, awareness
(Military Times, 29 Jul 26) ... Hope Hodge Seck
Military heatstroke cases were still on the rise in January 2025, according to Defense Health Agency data published in June, despite years of efforts to address and prevent heat injuries. However, Dr. Alexis Mazlo, one of the report's authors, said the increase in reported cases may illustrate that the awareness campaign has succeeded. Mazlo, an epidemiologist at DHA's Public Health Disease Epidemiology branch in Aberdeen, Md., said the increase in heatstroke could indicate that modes are flagging and diagnosing cases more consistently, though she acknowledged it could also mean early signs of heat exhaustion are being missed. The Air Force and Marine Corps saw sharp decreases in heat illness diagnoses between 2023 and 2025. Mazlo said DHA surveillance data "tries to provide commanders with an objective and highly specific picture of the magnitude and severity of the threat of heat illness. And then we hope that leaders can deploy evidence-based prevention and mitigation strategies where they're needed to preserve readiness, but without compromising training rigor."

AIR FORCE NEWS
5. Air Force may cut back on Pacific drills to preserve near-term 'readiness'
(Defense News, 29 Jul 26) ... Wyatt Olson
Pacific Air Forces could cancel its exercise tempo to preserve readiness as it continues to support operations in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, PACAF Commander Gen. Kevin Schneider said Monday. "We do 40 [exercises] in PACAF, give or take a couple every year, and that's a lot," Schneider said during a Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies event. "They all have benefits, but we're taking a look at what are ... readiness-gainers." Exercises that don't contribute directly to readiness may get triaged out, Schneider added. PACAF participates in Red Flag-Alaska, Cope North, Valiant Shield, and Resolute Force Pacific exercises. Schneider said the command plans to expand REFORPAC for 2027, bringing in joint forces and partner nations.

6. Space Force plans demolition of 'outdated' CCA hatch next year
(Defense News, 29 Jul 26) ... Stephen Losey
The Air Force plans to demolish a hatch in a special part of state Collaborative Combat Aircraft by six or fewer next year for Increment 2 of the CCA program, the program acquisition executive for fighters and advanced aircraft said Tuesday. "We will continue to maximize competition through all the phases of CCA Increment 2," Col. Timothy Hoffrich said during the Life Cycle Industry Days conference in Dayton, Ohio. The Air Force is also partnering with the Defense Innovation Unit to find a low-cost successor to the MQ-9A Reaper, which has seen substantial attrition in Operation Epic Fury. Col. John Dayton, the portfolio acquisition executive for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance and special forces operations, said a DIU competition for the Mass Modular Aircraft program generated "a very robust industry response."

7. Iran war 'accelerated' key tanker connectivity upgrades, top Air Force officials say
(Defense News, 29 Jul 26) ... Stephen Losey
The Air Force has prioritized air domain awareness upgrades for its tanker fleet following the loss of two KC-135 Stratotankers in a crash during Operation Epic Fury, officials said Tuesday during the Life Cycle Industry Days conference in Dayton, Ohio. "We absolutely accelerated [Mobility Air Forces] connectivity because of Operation Epic Fury," said Col. Paul Tinker, the deputy program acquisition executive for the mobility program. "We diverted personnel and funding resources to make that happen. It's [Air Mobility Command's] number one priority, and it continues to be their number one priority. We really focused on that for the last couple of months." An AMC spokesperson said the majority of the KC-135 fleet is now equipped with Real Time Information in the Cockpit systems. Col. Melvin Baylon, senior materiel leader for the Legacy Tankers Division, said the acquisitions arm has worked with AMC on several upgrades, including increased Link 16 access.

8. Air Force eyes a busy 2027 to resolve KC-46 vision system issues
(Defense News, 29 Jul 26) ... Wyatt Olson
The Air Force has much significant progress on upgrades to the KC-46 Pegasus's Remote Vision System, and KC-46 tankers should start getting the new system late next year. "What we've seen over the last six months is both Boeing and the Air Force recommitting to the KC-46," said Col. David Hall, senior materiel leader for the Air Force's KC-46 division, during the Life Cycle Industry Days conference in Dayton, Ohio. The Air Force has received 106 of the 180 KC-46s ordered from the original program of record, said Brig. Gen. William Ottati, the portfolio acquisition executive for mobility. RVS 2.0 uses sensors, screens and high-definition cameras to give boom operators a 3D color image through the boom. Defense Department leaders have said they won't sign a contract for more KC-46 tankers until Boeing makes significant progress fixing Category 1 issues with the aircraft, two of which relate to the RVS.

9. Experts: use urgent need to defend bases from drone attack. Here's what UAF is doing
(Air Force Times, 29 Jul 26) ... Brian Everstine
The Air Force is working to create a Point Defense force to protect bases from adversary drone attacks, but a new paper from the Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies argues that the Air Force needs to do more, faster. "We've seen that the adversary is evolving ... and we have to do the same," said Michael Hawley, director of future operations under the deputy chief of staff for operations. "We're putting more emphasis into the point defense mission from an organic, train and equip standpoint." But retired Brig. Gen. Houston Cantrell, a senior fellow with the Mitchell Institute, said it doesn't feel like the Air Force has a sense of urgency. "Point defense is obviously going to be critical to this, but a [purely] defensive strategy is a losing strategy," Cantrell said Wednesday. "We have to think beyond point defense." Cantrell said the Air Force must equip Airmen with up-to-date technology to detect and defeat drones and develop an offensive plan to degrade adversary drone manufacturing capabilities. Air base commanders must also be able to manage their bases' electromagnetic spectrum. "This is an additive mission ... and we've got to provide those capabilities," Cantrell said.

10. South Korean party pressure US military for more details on white phosphorus incident
(Stars and Stripes, 29 Jul 26) ... Jaha Yoodeok and Kim Tae-gyu
Members of South Korea's opposition party have called on U.S. Forces Korea to explain the handling of white phosphorus residue at Osan Air Base, Korea, on Tuesday, which triggered a brief evacuation in nearby Pyongtaek. Officials with the 51st Fighter Wing said Airmen discovered white phosphorus residue inside a munitions crate on base and that an explosive ordnance disposal team was called in to confirm the finding. Members of South Korea's Progressive Party called on USFK to provide more information, "including the purpose and scale of the white phosphorus storage, the amount leaked, the cause of the incident, whether the substance leaked outside the base, and the extent of the contamination," according to a statement from party spokesperson Lee Mi-ryun. South Korean media outlets said Tuesday that the white phosphorus was prohibited by about 80 percent, decreasing the risk to human health and the environment, but officials with the 51st declined to comment on those reports.

SPACE FORCE NEWS
11. SpaceX wins $1.6B in launch Space Force 'sensing and targeting' sats

(Breaking Defense, 29 Jul 26) ... Theresa Hitchens
The Space Force announced a $1.6 billion contract with SpaceX for two National Security Space Launch Phase 3 Lane 1 missions on Wednesday. The two task orders cover 2027 launches for the Space Based Sensing and Targeting portfolio acquisition executive office, SBC officials said. The SBST PAE manages the Space-Based Airborne Moving Target Indicator program, which is designed to complement the Air Force's E-7 Wedgetail program. Department of the Air Force officials have advocated moving AMTI capabilities to space as adversary air defense systems grow more sophisticated.

12. Space Force awards All Points $250 million to expand satellite processing at Vandenberg
(SpaceNews, 29 Jul 26) ... Sandra Erwin
The Space Force awarded a $250 million contract to All Points Logistics to expand satellite processing capability at Vandenberg Space Force Base, Calif., service officials said Wednesday. "The current and future operating environments rely on a launch enterprise that can scale the infrastructure and processes necessary for responsive and reliable launch capabilities," said Col. Dan Highlander, director of operations integration for the Space Force's acquisition office for space access. All Points Logistics executives said the company will design and build a commercially owned and operated spacecraft processing center, which will include multiple high- and low-bay processing areas, blast-rated hazardous material processing capability, secure mission areas, and advanced monitoring and communications systems. Vandenberg SFB is the primary U.S. launch site for missions into polar and sun-synchronous orbits.

OP INTEREST
13. Trump-Zelenskyy relationship teams up UK, Ukraine ejes deepen defense cooperation
(Stars and Stripes, 29 Jul 26) ... John Vandiver
U.S. President Donald Trump and Ukranian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met in the White House on Tuesday to discuss ways to bolster U.S.-Ukraine defense cooperation. Zelenskyy said he and trump discussed licenses for Patriot interceptor production and other ideas to help deepen the U.S.-Ukraine partnership. Trump said during a NATO summit earlier this month that he's willing to grant production licenses to Ukraine, which would allow it to produce Patriot interceptors domestically. Zelenskyy also met with Lockheed Martin executives to discuss joint manufacturing and technology endeavors.

14. 'Move are strikes on Russian forces for victory' Drapety tells NATO chief in 1st call
(Kyiv Post, 29 Jul 26) ... Unpublished
The commander in chief of Ukraine's armed forces said he intends to strengthen operations across multiple domains in a call with the commander of U.S. European Command on Wednesday. Ukrainian Gen. Mykhailo Drapaty, speaking with U.S. Air Force Gen. Alexus Grynkevich, said Ukraine needs to develop its Army Corps structure while increasing the autonomy of its corps-level formations. Drapaty said he thanked Grynkevich for helping secure additional air defence systems for Ukraine and that he thanked U.S. President Donald Trump, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and the Defense Department for assistance offered through the Prioritized Ukraine Requirements List. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that Drapaty, who was appointed July 21 to replace Gen. Oleksandr Syrsky, would focus on increasing the adaptability and effectiveness of Ukraine's military.

15. Ukraine, NATO launch new funding program to counter Russian drones

(Breaking Defense, 29 Jul 26) ... Elizabeth Gonzalez Malo
NATO and Ukraine defense technology cluster Brave1 have launched a program that will fund defense companies, including counterdrone systems designed to counter fiber-optic-wire and one-way attack drones, Brave1 announced Tuesday. The program includes funding of up to €500 per partner for joint ventures between a Ukrainian firm and a firm from a NATO member. A representative for Ukrainian company SkyGall said Russia is increasingly relying on Shahed drones to hit inside Ukraine, replacing long-range artillery.

16. Pentagon, under Trump, Hegseth, shows certain tighter control from war
(The Hill, 29 Jul 26) ... Filip Timofejev
The Defense Department has come under scrutiny from Congress and the public for appearing to withhold information on troop casualties and failing to provide regular updates on the progress of the U.S.-Iran war. Twelve Senate Democrats, led by Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-Mexico), wrote to Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth to ask about the DOD's handling of the Defense Casualty Analysis System and how many service members have been screened for traumatic brain injuries. Jason Dempsey, a former special assistant to the Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman, said the Pentagon's handling of Iran war casualties reflects a "deep professional and moral certainties, adding that it felt terms considering Hegseth's criticisms of the Global War on Terrorism. But Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) said he's satisfied the DOD has been "sufficiently transparent" with Congress and the American public regarding the war. The Pentagon asked Congress on June to exempt all controlled unclassified information from Freedom of Information Act requests. If DOD officials conclude the records are related to national defense vulnerabilities, a source that government watchdogs argue would "erode FOIA and undermine journalists, congressional committees, and watchdogs working to expose mismanagement and abuse within the military."

17. Warren pushes Pentagon program to hire highly paid private-sector workers
(CNBC, 29 Jul 26) ... Gamel Dorian
Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) has warned that the Defense Department's plan to recruit private-sector professionals to improve contracting could present significant revolving-door and conflict-of-interest concerns. "I have held longstanding concerns over potential conflicts of interest, revolving door abuse, and national security concerns in DODI's acquisition process," Warren said in a letter sent Tuesday to Deputy Defense Secretary Stephen Feinberg and Strategic Capital Director David Lesch. "Now I am concerned about the national security implications and the corruption concerns posed by DODI's [Business Operators for National Defense] initiative and Wall Street investor team and urge DOD to implement the necessary guardrails and oversight to fully address these concerns." Feinberg and Lesch were ex-CEO and managing director, respectively, for Cerberus Capital Management prior to being appointed to the DOD. Warren has also asked about specific guardrails to prevent conflicts of interest for executives from Meta, OpenAI and Palantir, whether anyone will receive salaries over $400,000, and whether bankers hired for the DOD will be held to ethical requirements during or after their service.

18. China, Russia, Iran and North Korea form 'axis of aggressors' that could overwhelm US, book warns
(Fox News, 29 Jul 26) ... Ethel Lachter
Russia, China, Iran and North Korea are working together even without a formal mutual defense treaty, according to a new publication from the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. "[W]hen I'm sitting in Ukraine, it's really obvious to me that Ukraine is fighting Russia, North Korea, Iran and China," said retired Marc Aldo Montgomery, one of the authors of "Axis of Aggressors: Countering the Cooperation of China, Russia, Iran and North Korea." Montgomery said the greatest threat from the four nations is that the United States can't handle any one of them without addressing the threat posed by the others. North Korean could escalate tensions with South Korea or even conduct limited attacks against U.S. forces in the event of a Chinese Taiwan conflict, while Iran could intensify its war between Russia and NATO through terrorism or other hostile activity, Montgomery said. Russia and China could also help Iran rebuild military capabilities damaged during its wars against Israel and the United States, Montgomery said. "The longer they can entangle the United States, whether it was in Ukraine or in Iran, China and Russia are the primary beneficiaries," he said.

19. Diminished stockpiles may force US, allies to take more risks to conserve interceptors: analysts
(Air Force Times, 29 Jul 26) ... Brian Everstine
An analysis from the Center for Strategic and International Studies published Monday warns that renewed fighting between the United States and Iran has expanded more of the U.S. stockpile of missile interceptors, which could force U.S. and allied forces to take more risks with interceptors. "There are no good alternatives to Patriot and [Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense] for ballistic missile defense," the CSIS analysis wrote. "Navy ships, with Standard Missiles that can intercept such threats, generally are too far away." A report from NBC News on Friday said military commanders have decided not to intercept Iranian drones and missiles that would cause no damage to troops, allies or infrastructure, but that could increase the risk of Iranian attacks injuring or killing troops.

SOCIAL MEDIA

SUMMARY: Air Force social media posts included coverage of a southern exercise at Kunsan Air Base, South Korea. Space Force social media posts included an announcement for the Guardian Across 2026 competition, an article on the unveiling of the 1st Space Launch Squadron at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Fla., and an article on a contract award for the next-generation Maritime & Aviation Receiver Cord M-code receiver.

• Air Force on Facebook: Posts included coverage of a southern exercise at Kunsan Air Base, South Korea. Total engagement was 816 reactions, 32 comments and 88 shares.
• Air Force on Instagram: Posts included photo by Master Sgt. Jonathan Alderman and Staff Sgt. Zach Hewold of Airmen with the Wyoming Air National Guard's 153rd Airlift Wing working on the flightline at Cheyenne Air National Guard Base, Wyo. Total engagement was 5,931 likes and 13 comments.
• Air Force on LinkedIn: Posts included photo by Master Sgt. Jonathan Alderman and Staff Sgt. Zach Hewold of Airmen with the Wyoming Air National Guard's 153rd Airlift Wing working on the flightline at Cheyenne Air National Guard Base, Wyo. Total engagement was 1,911 reactions, 37 comments and 69 shares.
• Space Force on X: Posts included an article on the unveiling of the 1st Space Launch Squadron at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Fla. Total engagement was 25 replies, 157 reposts and 669 likes.
• Space Force on LinkedIn: Posts included an article on a contract award for the next-generation Maritime & Aviation Receiver Cord M-code receiver. Total engagement was 24 reactions and one repost.

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