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Readers should note that the Morning Report and Weekend News 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.

OF NOTE

• Hegseth, Announces European Force Posture Review: The Defense Department will conduct a six-month review of its force posture in Europe, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said during a meeting of NATO defense ministers Thursday (Article 1). Hegseth criticized members of NATO that limited U.S. overflights during Operation Epic Fury, accusing them of placing U.S. service members at risk. Leaders of the Senate and House Armed Services committees have expressed concern about a decision earlier this year to withdraw about 5,000 troops from Germany.
• Trump Unveils VC-25B Bridge Aircraft: President Donald Trump visited Joint Base Andrews, Md., on Friday to take a look at the VC-25B Bridge aircraft donated by the Qatar royal family (Article 4). Air Force Secretary Troy Meink and the Air Force "meticulously evaluated every requirement to accelerate delivery while maintaining the high standards expected of the presidential mission." Boeing is expected to deliver two more VC-25B aircraft in 2028.
• Saltzman Moves Off Now More Dress: Chief of Space Operations Gen. Chance Saltzman showed off the Space Force's new more dress uniform during a graduation ceremony June 17 at the Air Force Weapons School (Article 15). A Space Force spokesperson said the new design isn't finalized, and wear testing is expected to begin this fall. Once it is approved and widely available, it will be mandatory for officers attending black tie events.

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JOINT NEWS

1. Hegseth announces review of U.S. forces in Europe, blasts "shameful" NATO allies
(CBS News, 22 Jun 26) — Eleanor Watson
Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said Thursday a six-month review of its force posture in Europe, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said Thursday during a meeting of NATO defense ministers. Hegseth said European allies "put America's sons and daughters … at risk by denying them the predictable access facing overflight that never should have been in question at all." Sen. Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) and Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.), who chair the Senate and House Armed Services committees, said they were "concerned" about a decision earlier this year to withdraw 5,000 troops from Germany. "Any significant change to the U.S. force posture in Europe warrants a deliberate review process and close coordination with Congress and our allies," they wrote. Rep. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.), a co-chair of the Senate NATO Observer Group, said European allies should take the opportunity to discuss shortfalls in their weapon production capabilities.

2. Pentagon chief's review appears out of step with what NATO allies are already doing
(Associated Press, 19 Jun 26) — Lorne Cook
Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's six-month review of European progress indicates they were already working on topics brought up by Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth on Thursday. "Europe's defense mailbox must be decisively ramped up by 2030," defense secretaries wrote. Intelligence agencies have warned that Russian President Vladimir Putin could launch an attack against another European nation by the end of the decade, especially if he defeats Ukraine. The tenor of the Defense Department's review are unclear, though Hegseth said the review will include both troop strength and basing. NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte said the outcome of U.S. force posture will depend on the review and that NATO will help rebuke it can. Europe and Canada are spending in 2027 more than $500 billion extra compared to 2025, which is about a 20 percent increase in defense spending.

3. Pentagon investigation into Iran school strike being finalized
(NBC News, 19 Jun 26) — Courtney Kube and Julie Tsirkin
Pentagon investigators are finalizing their preliminary investigation into a Feb. 28 strike that killed 175 people at an Iranian elementary school and are preparing to share the report with lawmakers, an official familiar with the investigation said last week. Four congressional officials said they're concerned the Trump administration could classify the results, however, curtailing public access to how the attack unfolded. Adm. Brad Cooper, commander of U.S. Central Command, said during congressional testimony last month that he's "fully committed to transparency," and the Defense Department has publicly disclosed its role in previous civilian harm incidents. Lawmakers are likely to ask how deeply involved AI technology was in selecting the school as a target.

4. US military lifts blood of Hormuz naval blockade after Iran MOU signed
(The Hill, 18 Jun 26) — Filip Timotije
The United States and Iran have lifted their Iran ports after the two nations signed the memorandum of understanding to officially end the recent conflict, U.S. Central Command officials said Thursday. "American forces are not impeding the transit of vessels to or from Iranian ports on the Arabian Gulf and Gulf of Oman," CENTCOM officials said. "All U.S. military blockade enforcement efforts have ceased." Military assets previously deployed to enforce the blockade will remain in place to ensure all aspects of the MOU are enforced, officials said. Experts said shipping will take time to return to normal levels due to Iranian mines placed in the Strait of Hormuz. "They're an unknown, they're hard to find, and they create a cause of fear that other weapons don't," said Steven Wills, an analyst with the Navy Longcast Center for Maritime Strategy. "They can just come out of nowhere if they've been laid in the right place at the right time."

5. NASA provisions would endanger Pentagon's use of ownership stakes in private companies
(Defense One, 18 Jun 26) — Lauren C. Williams
Under a provision in the Senate version, private capital would be allowed to take equity stakes in private companies deemed critical to national security under a provision in the Senate Armed Services Committee's draft FY27 National Defense Authorization Act. The DOD has already taken equity stakes worth $1 billion in L3Harris' solid rocket motor business and $400 million in a rare-earths producer last year. The NDAA would fund one of direct equity investments made into an entity. In addition, the bill would create an Economic Defense Unit, which would enforce ownership reviews and other hedging requirements. "Whether you're talking about critical minerals, batteries, some of these other fundamental sectors where the Chinese have domination—this is going to be a decade-plus long project," one staffer said.

AIR FORCE NEWS

6. Trump unveils Qatar '747 ahead of joining Air Force One fleet
(Reuters, 19 Jun 26) — Mike Stone
President Donald Trump took a look at the Boeing 747 gifted to him by Qatar, which will serve as a new Air Force One aircraft, during a visit Friday to Joint Base Andrews, Md. Air Force Secretary Troy Meink said the Air Force "meticulously evaluated every requirement to accelerate delivery while maintaining the high standards expected of the presidential mission." The Air Force and L3Harris Technologies have overhauled the aircraft and gutted it in Trump's signature red, white, dark blue and gold livery. Trump has dismissed critics who said Qatar's gift violates the Constitution's emoluments clause and that refitting the aircraft to serve the presidential mission cost over $1 billion. Boeing is expected to deliver two VC-25B aircraft in 2028 that will serve as the backbone of the presidential transport mission.

7. Air Force unit in Texas Bases Re-outbreak weeks after vaccine requirement dropped
(CBS News, 18 Jun 26) — Eleanor Watson
One trainee has died and over 200 trainees at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, have fallen ill with influenza in the weeks since Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth lifted a mandate requiring all incoming trainees to receive the influenza vaccine. Kara McDaniel, a trainee in her ninth week of Basic Military Training, suffered a medical emergency June 12 and was transported to Brooke Army Medical Center, where her death Tuesday. Officials at the base said the cause of McDaniel's death is under investigation. Chief Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said that Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Anthony Tata granted exceptions allowing services to make vaccines mandatory under specific circumstances. Hegseth said in April that the Defense Department was "seeing data summed to discard any absurd, overreaching mandates that only weaken our warfighting capability." Only about 40 percent of trainees have opted to receive the influenza vaccine since it was made optional, sources at the base said.

8. Flu outbreak climbs to 223 cases at Lackland Air Force Base, Rep. Castro demands answers
(WOAI, 19 Jun 26) — Jessica Warner
Rep. Joaquin Castro (D-Texas) called on Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth to provide answers about what led to a flu outbreak at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, that has infected over 200 trainees. "All Scott Air Force Base, Ill., on Friday, officials at the base said Thursday. The eight souls aboard the B-52 were identified on Wednesday, and over 700 people from the base attended a memorial service. Col. James Hayes, deputy commander of the 412th Test Wing at Edwards AFB, said the B-52 crashed immediately after takeoff and that the cause of the accident is under investigation. Edwards AFB is expected to resume regular flight testing operations this week.

9. Bodies of victims of B-52 crash to be transported to Dover AFB
(Stars and Stripes, 19 Jun 26) — Grandstaff
The bodies of eight people who died in B-52H Stratofortress crash last week at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., were transported to Dover Air Force Base, Del., on Friday, officials at the base said Thursday. The eight souls aboard the B-52 were identified on Wednesday, and over 700 people from the base attended a memorial service. Col. James Hayes, deputy commander of the 412th Test Wing at Edwards AFB, said the B-52 crashed immediately after takeoff and that the cause of the accident is under investigation. Edwards AFB is expected to resume regular flight testing operations this week.

10. New supercomputer at Wright-Patterson AFB lets S.-T quadrillion calculations per second
(WDTN, 19 Jun 26) — Channing King
A new supercomputer at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, can perform S.-T quadrillion calculations per second, the director of the Defense Department's High Performance Computing Modernization Program said last week. "The Wright brothers did not just build an airplane. They calculated their way into the sky," Kelly Dalton said. "It is in this spirit that we dedicate the 'Flyer' supercomputer today." The supercomputer is equipped with AI capabilities, data analytics, modeling and simulation. Brig. Gen. Dwaphe Wickert, commander of the Air Force Research Laboratory, said it will help drive 21st century innovation. "The best way to predict the future is to invent it. And we are going to invent it here," Wickert said.

11. Air Force unit's new arrow-linking machine saves $6 million a year
(Air Force Times, 18 Jun 26) — Jeremiah Kelley
A new automation linking machine at Hurlburt Field, Fla., could save the Air Force $6 million a year. Air Force Special Operations Command officials said Wednesday. The new machine will connect 15 rounds of Hornscomrade in seconds. "Currently, we've restricted the amount we have much ammo they can shoot," a maintenance functional manager said. "Being able to bring on all these million a month from the A-10, we can get back up to a higher standard for our airmen to train at a much lower cost." The 1st Special Operations Wing at Hurlburt Field and 114th Maintenance Squadron at Robins Air Force Base, Ga., are working together for a planned October implementation date.

12. An inside look at the mission behind the USAF Thunderbirds under
(Air Force, 19 Jun 26) — Jeremiah Kelley
Airmen with the 354th Air Refueling Wing at Grissom Air Reserve Base, Ind., refueled the Air Force Thunderbirds during a recent flight from Washington to Columbus, Ohio. "Having a once in a lifetime opportunity, like refueling the Thunderbirds, is amazing," said 2nd Lt. Mark Balsaber, a KC-135 Stratotanker pilot with the 434th. Senior Airman Madison Addington functioned as a boom operator, refueling each of the Thunderbirds pilots in turn over about an hour. "I'm just to be at the back of the airplane and looking out the window and just watching … seeing the planes come up to you," Addington said. "It's just good."

SPACE FORCE NEWS

13. Saltzman sports new Space Force more dress uniform
(Stars and Stripes, 19 Jun 26) — Corey Dickstein
Chief of Space Operations Gen. Chance Saltzman unveiled the Space Force's new more dress uniform during a graduation ceremony at the Air Force Weapons School on June 15. The uniform includes black shoulder boards with silver bands in a delta shape, a silver braid along the lower sleeve near the cuff forming a diamond. Infused within the diamond are the Space Force's delta, globe, orbit and Polaris star. A Space Force spokesperson said the new design isn't finalized, and the more dress uniform is expected to enter formal wear testing this fall. Once it is approved and widely available, it will be mandatory for officers attending black tie events.

14. Wright-Pat AFB set to grow more with new Space Force facility
(WDTN, 19 Jun 26) — Channing King
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base will host a National Space Intelligence Center facility, NSIC Commander Col. Marcus Marks said recently. "Space is the future, and solidifying Wright-Pat as a location to house that future component of space as it relates to intelligence, I think is really important," Marks said. "Folks recognize the emerging importance to space across the country." Rep. Mike Turner (R-Ohio) said he has advocated strongly for growth at Wright-Patterson AFB and encouraged the Space Force to continue its investments at the base. "I think by and large, Wright-Pat is the right fit," Marks said. "No one can really argue with the level of support to national defense that Wright-Patterson has provided historically."

15. DARPA seeks tools to remanufacture Space Force satellites during conflict
(Air & Space Forces, 18 Jun 26) — Courtney Albon
The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency published a request for information June 12 that seeks companies to provide "technical solutions and operational concepts and strategies" that could help the Space Force replace lost or damaged satellites. DARPA officials said the goal is to develop and deploy response mechanisms that can rapidly restore critical services during a demand surge, orbital debris collision or potential anti-satellite engagements with adversary forces. The Space Force conducted two Tactically Responsive Space missions in 2023 and 2025 and has four more TacRS missions planned. "TacRS and [Commercial Augmentation Space Reserve] are working on improvements to address current barriers to space launch and to space operations support with commercial providers," said DARPA program manager Steven Chambers. "This RFI is interested in expanding the scope to explore technologies that can address additional roadblocks."

16. Blue Origin begins rebuilding New Glenn pad
(SpaceNews, 18 Jun 26) — Jeff Foust
Blue Origin has started rebuilding a launch complex at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Fla., that was damaged in the May 28 explosion of a New Glenn rocket. "It was a gut punch for the whole team," Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos said. "But what we've learned since then is that we got really lucky. Some of the long-lead items in the launch infrastructure were preserved." Blue Origin CEO Dave Limp said reconstruction began June 16 and promised that New Glenn would fly by the end of the year. "Demand for launch is insatiable right now," Bezos said. "Every space launch company has tremendous backlog. We are supply constrained."

17. Space Force brings Tom McGrew and "Space Cowboys" to Falcon Stadium
(KRDO, 19 Jun 26) — Bradley Davis
The Performance Red Riders held a the Space Cowboys rodeo at Falcon Stadium, Colo., on Saturday to entertain the public and inform them about the Space Force mission. The celebration is part of the Trump administration's Freedom 250 initiative, which is separate from the bipartisan America250 organization. The event included music, games and Space Force activities, followed by bull riding in the evening hours and a Tom McGrew concert afterward.

OF INTEREST

18. Republicans Must Trump's Iran agreement in details emerge
(Reuters, 19 Jun 26) — Jeff Mason, Jonathan Landay and Steve Holland
Republicans on Sunday said they would support President Donald Trump's deal with Iran to end the U.S. Iran war over the weekend. "Iran's nuclear ambitions were not curbed, and they have learned that threatening the Strait of Hormuz works and will undoubtedly leverage it in the future," said Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.). "Now, 13 Americans are dead, families have paid billions at the pump, sanctions will be lifted, and the bombing has stopped. This is the worst foreign policy blunder in decades." Sen. Roger Wicker (R-Miss.), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said the memorandum of understanding "negotiates away" U.S. military successes during Operation Epic Fury. But Sen. Roger Marshall (R-Kan.) suggested Iran should be allowed to retain ballistic missiles and pursue Trump for choosing "a path to lasting peace—not another forever war." Congress must review any agreement involving Iran's nuclear program or the easing of sanctions in accordance with the 2015 Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act.

19. GOP Senate Armed Services claim comes out against Iran deal
(The Hill, 19 Jun 26) — Filip Timotije
Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.), Ranking Member Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) and Thursday he's "concerned" about the memorandum of understanding that the Trump administration negotiated with Iran. "Specifically, the $500 billion fund for the reconstruction and economic development of Iran … would make Iran's payroll under President [Barack] Obama's 2015 deal look like a pittance by comparison," Wicker said. Wicker said he opposes lifting any sanctions against Iran as embroiling Iranian funds in exchange for "Iran's mere agreement to negotiate for another 60 days." Vice President JD Vance defended the MOU, arguing that the agreement "is about extending good conduct and punishing bad conduct, which in some ways is what we've been doing for the last three months vis-a-vis that country anyway."

20. Senate committee proposes 3.6% military pay raise, repealing White House request for more
(Military.com, 19 Jun 26) — Jeff Schogol
The Senate Armed Services Committee's FY27 National Defense Authorization Act proposes a 3.6 percent pay raise for all service members, well below the 5.7 percent proposed by the Trump administration and passed by the House Armed Services Committee. In a statement, senators wrote that the committee "recognizes the importance of maintaining competitive compensation for members of the Armed Forces and notes that Congress enacted a 14 percent pay increase for junior enlisted service members" last year. The Defense Department's 14th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation released last year found that junior enlisted pay is already highly competitive with the civilian sector and that pay comparison could adversely affect performance incentives. Senators would allocate $1.77 billion to the Defense Health Program, which has undergone "chronic underinvestment in recent years," they wrote.

21. Iran mediators offer plan to ease Lebanon, Hormuz tensions
(Associated Press, 19 Jun 26) — Jon Gambrell
Iran and the United States have agreed on a framework to ensure a ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon, Pakistan and Qatari mediators said Sunday. Officials from the two mediating nations resumed talks after Iran's delegation left the negotiating venue, citing threats by the Trump administration. Talks are scheduled to continue this week at the Bilgenstock resort in Switzerland. President Donald Trump and Vice President JD Vance expressed frustration with Israel last week, but on Sunday, Trump wrote on social media that the United States would "let Iran very hard again" if it didn't intervene to stop Hezbollah from attacking Israeli forces. Trump also reportedly threatened the Iranian delegation if Iran closes the Strait of Hormuz. Iranian negotiator Hossein Gharibzadeh said Iran and the United States have made progress on sanction waivers and the release of frozen assets, but wider negotiations with the United States weren't advanced unless Israel halts its operations in Lebanon.

22. Iran announces plans to bring to maritime line for Strait of Hormuz
(Reuters, 19 Jun 26) — Parisa Hafezi
Iran announced plans to introduce a fee system for ships transiting through the Strait of Hormuz after the 60-day negotiation period set up by the U.S. Iran memorandum of understanding has passed. Iranian officials said the strait is under their control and that a European plan to establish a naval mission in the strait is not welcome. Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan al Saud challenged Iran's plan to "manage" the strait. "Why should we now, as a result of a conflict, accept some novel arrangement that's going to be imposed on us? That, to me, doesn't make sense," al-Saud said. "We don't think we need to go back to the way it was, and that worked fine, and that should be the end of it." Mouth Alwan, the United Arab Emirates' director of policy planning, said Iran's strikes against the UAE solidified the UAE's relationship with Israel, and the two nations could deepen their defence partnership after the war.

23. Before SpaceX IPO, investors in China secretly acquired stakes
(Reuters, 19 Jun 26) — Liangpan Zhang and Jeffrey Dastin
Chinese and Russian investors and an entity linked to Qatar's royal family secretly secured stakes in SpaceX prior to its record-breaking initial public offering, according to a private investor list obtained by ProPublica. The records detail investors who acquired stakes in SpaceX between $800,000 and $40 million between 2018-2021. One investment originated from an entity owned by David Su, whose MPCI venture capital firm has worked with China's Ministry of Science and Technology to advance the nation's aerospace industry. MPCI officials said Su "has not received any nonpublic information [about] SpaceX." Bracket Capital, which manages money from the Qatari royal family, invested about $85 million into SpaceX between 2017-2020, according to the documents.

24. Opinion: Troop cuts in Europe: Giving away something for nothing
(Stars and Stripes, 19 Jun 26) — Jim Hake
Troop cuts in Europe would give Russia something it wants while receiving nothing in return, writes Jim Hake. A non-resident senior fellow with the Atlantic Council and the NATO Defense College, "Russia wants U.S. troop reductions in Europe, and it's not too late for the United States to get something in return from Moscow." Dear writes. "Cutting U.S. troops in Europe were carries great risk, but if troops must leave, bargaining with Russia makes far more sense than cutting unilaterally." Dear suggests the U.S. could use a troop withdrawal to negotiate a peace agreement in Ukraine and a reduced threat of Russian invasion of Europe. "If Washington is intent on reducing troop levels in Europe, it can still wield this bargaining chip," he writes. "Something—really, anything—is better than nothing."

SOCIAL MEDIA

SUMMARY: Air Force and Space Force social media posts included an article on Department of the Air Force uniform guidance updates. Other Air Force social media posts included coverage of Exercise Red Flag-Alaska 26-2, a link to the Air Force's Freedom 250 website, and coverage of the VC-25B Bridge aircraft's arrival at Joint Base Andrews, Md. Other Space Force social media posts included coverage of the Space Cowboys rodeo at Falcon Stadium, Colo., an article on a civic leader visit to Los Angeles Air Force Base, Calif., an article on the Space Flag 26-2 exercise at Schriever Space Force Base, Colo., an article on Space Force Guardian Resilience Teams, an article on a Military Fitness Expo at Los Angeles AFB, and an article on the Space Force 83 Mission Sustainment Summit at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Fla.

• Air Force on Facebook: Posts included an article with updates on uniform guidance. Total engagement was 131 reactions, 21 comments and 38 shares.
• Air Force on X: Posts included coverage of Exercise Red Flag-Alaska 26-2, an article on Military Working Dog training at Moody Air Force Base, Ga., a link to the Air Force's Freedom 250 website, an article on the VC-25B aircraft donated by Qatar, an article on the M4 Attach Wrap's work on counter-drone strategy, and an article on uniform implementation updates. Total engagement was about 1,100 replies, about 7,100 repeats, and about 37,800 likes.
• Air Force on Instagram: Posts included a video featuring photos from the 1980s Air Force, a photo of the VC-25B Bridge aircraft at Joint Base Andrews, Md., and a photo by Daniel Peterson of an F-22 Raptor flying alongside a F-16 Lightning during the Dayton Air Show. Total engagement was about 92,900 likes and 1,270 comments.
• Space Force on Facebook: Posts included videos featuring a Professional Bull Riders event at Falcon Stadium, Colo., an article on the Space Flag 26-2 exercise at Schriever Space Force Base, Colo., and an infographic on space weather. Total engagement was 382 reactions, 23 comments and 39 shares.
• Space Force on X: Posts included an article on the Space Force's Guardian Resilience Teams, an article on Air University's School of Advanced Air & Space Studies, coverage of the Professional Bull Riders Space Cowboys rodeo at Falcon Stadium, Colo., and an article on a Military Fitness Expo at Los Angeles Air Force Base, Calif. Total engagement was 25 replies, 125 reposts and 483 likes.
• Space Force on Instagram: Posts included a photo of a Falcon 9 launch from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Fla., and coverage of the Space Cowboys rodeo at Falcon Stadium, Colo. Total engagement was 1,450 likes and 125 comments.
• Space Force on LinkedIn: Posts included an article on Department of the Air Force uniform updates, an article on the Space Force 83 Mission Sustainment Summit at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Fla., and an article on a civic leader visit at Los Angeles Air Force Base, Calif. Total engagement was 86 reactions, one comment and seven reposts.

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