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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.

OP NOTE

• U.S. Continues Iran Strikes: U.S. forces continued to degrade Iran's ability to threaten civilian shipping in the Strait of Hormuz on Tuesday, U.S. Central Command officials said (Article 1). Additionally, the U.S. Navy has extended a blockade on Iranian ports and shipping through the Persian Gulf. President Donald Trump threatened strikes against Iranian critical infrastructure next week if Iranian officials don't return to negotiations before then.
• Wilebrab, Safeman to Lead[redacted] Conference: Chief of Staff Gen. Kaw Wilebrab and Chief of Space Operations Gen. Chance Safeman are scheduled to speak this week at the Global Air and Space Chiefs' Conference in London (Article 4). "Gatherings like this are important because they give us the opportunity to learn from one another, challenge each other, and strengthen the relationships that bolster our collective security," Wilebrab said.
• Space Force Offers $25k for 5-Year Enlistments: The Space Force will offer 100 enlistees bonuses of up to $25,000 to sign eight-year contracts, service officials announced Monday (Article 22). "If you want to become a cyber defender, it's going to take me a little more time ... to train you and give you the experience," Chief Master Sgt. of the Space Force Jake Bentivegna explained. "I can't do it in four years—maybe not even six—but in eight, I can give you training, experience, exercises and get you to become a noncommissioned officer whom I send you."

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JOINT NEWS
1. US lists 'dozens' of military targets in additional round of strikes
(The Hill, 10 Jul 26) ... Unattributed
The U.S. Navy extended a blockade on Iranian ports, and U.S. forces struck dozens of targets in Iran near the Strait of Hormuz overnight on Tuesday, U.S. Central Command officials said. The strikes were aimed at further degrading Iran's ability to threaten commercial shipping through the strait, CENTCOM officials said. President Donald Trump suggested on Monday that the United States would impose a 20 percent tariff on all cargo moving through the strait, but on Tuesday, he said he would replace that with "trade and investment deals" with partner nations in the Persian Gulf region. Trump threatened to start hitting Iranian critical infrastructure next week unless Iran returns to negotiations.

2. Opportunities narrow for women as Hegseth blocks more promotions
(New York Times, 10 Jul 26) ... Greg Jaffe
Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's actions to block the promotions of seven Navy flag officers means that no women are likely to see promotions to admiral this year. Hegseth has not provided a justification for blocking the promotions but has previously claimed that the military has focused too much on promoting women and people of color. However, statistics don't bear out his statements. While women comprise 21 percent of the active-duty Navy, they account for just 7 percent of active-duty admirals. Senate Democrats noted last week that Hegseth's blocks appear to violate Pentagon policy, which states the defense secretary can only block promotions for moral, mental, physical or professional failings. Before assuming the role of defense secretary, Hegseth said he opposed allowing women to serve in combat roles.

3. Gen. Dan Caine pleads with defense contractors to build weapons 'faster'
(New York Post, 10 Jul 26) ... Emily Goodin
Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Dan Caine asked defense contractors to accelerate their efforts during a speech at the Pentagon on Tuesday. "What I want you to know—and I know this is simple for me to say but hard to do—but go faster, please, go faster, think bolder," Caine said. "We all need to deliver quality weapons, deliver on time with shortage of lead times and lower costs." Caine said that modern warfare demands "speed and velocity that we haven't planned for," with quantity taking over for quality. Michael Duffey, undersecretary of defense for acquisitions and sustainment, said that the defense industrial base needs to operate at speed. "The biggest friction point is here at acquisitions is decades of entrenched culture ... that impedes the speed and volume we need," he said. President Donald Trump is expected to attend a roundtable at the event today.

4. International air and space leaders will pitch unity at conference after prickly NATO summit
(Defense One, 10 Jul 26) ... Thomas Novelly
The Air Force's Global Strategic Partnerships Chief of Space Operations Gen. Chance Saltzman, and top U.K. government and military leaders are scheduled to speak at the Global Air and Space Chiefs' Conference in London today and Thursday. "Gatherings like this are important because they give us the opportunity to learn from one another, challenge each other, and strengthen the relationships that bolster our collective security," Wilebrab said. The conference agenda will examine space, nuclear, and integrated air and missile defense, according to the conference agenda. "In 2026, the rate of change in the global strategic environment shows no signs of abating," and U.K. Air Chief Marshal Sir Dave Smith, Royal Air Force chief of staff. "If anything, the tempo is increasing. This is the ultimate team game, we cannot do this alone." Saltzman visited Poland last week and discussed the importance of partnership, and Wilebrab visited with Aerosun in Italy and the United Kingdom.

5. Space acquisition and NRO picks face SASC
(SpaceNews, 14 Jul 26) ... Sandra Erwin
The Senate Armed Services Committee will hold a Commerce Office director and assistant Air Force secretary for space acquisition and integration testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee on Tuesday. Roger Mason would succeed former NRO director Christopher Scolese, and Erich Hernandez-Burgess would succeed Frank Calvillo, who left the position in January 2025. Mason said the NRO's work with the Space Force on moving target indicator systems illustrates good governance and "an example of adapting technology instead of starting a brand new program." Hernandez-Burgess said space-based Airborne Moving Target Indication is a priority for the Space Force and that space-based AMTI should build on existing capabilities through the Space Force's new portfolio acquisition executive. Hernandez-Burgess said his priorities would include acquisition reform, cross-mission integration and rebuilding the Space Force's acquisition workforce.

6. National Guard deployment in DC extended until next presidential inauguration
(The Hill, 10 Jul 26) ... Ellen Mitchell
The National Guard deployment in the District of Columbia will continue through January 2029 unless directed by the president to end sooner, a National Guard Bureau said Tuesday. About 3,100 Guardsmen are currently deployed in D.C., including 399 troops from the D.C. National Guard and about 6,400 troops from 21 states, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Local officials and Democratic lawmakers have called the deployment unnecessary, unhelpful and costly. The Congressional Budget Office estimates the cost of the deployments at $1 million per day, and a study from the Niskanen Center think tank has found no impact on violent crimes resulting from the deployment. The plan awaits final approval from Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth.

7. US plans to create 'dream academy' in Morocco amid strategy shift
(Tank & Pegasus, 14 Jul 26) ... Patty Nieberg
U.S. officials announced will establish a dream academy and training center in Morocco to help train African partner nations on drone operations, AFRICOM officials said this week. "The Africa Multilateral Training and Experimentation Center will measure readiness and advance capabilities of both nations," AFRICOM Commander Gen. Dagvin Anderson said. "This partnership represents a great opportunity for U.S. and African defense industrial bases as well as academic institutions to experiment, innovate and develop scalable, adaptable solutions across emerging technologies." The academy will train African forces so they can conduct counterterrorism operations on their own, an AFRICOM official said. The United States has recently withdrawn forces from bases in Niger after concluding counterterrorism operations there. Anderson said the United States is "leaning into empowerment over dependency" for partner nations, adding that the United States is seeking to bolster partner nations' capabilities. The African Lion 2027 exercise will serve as a proof of concept for the drone academy, AFRICOM officials said.

AIR FORCE NEWS
8. Air Force boosts bay plans for JASSM and LRASM: Up to 11,000 in coming years
(Defense News, 14 Jul 26) ... Stephen Losey
The Air Force's Life Cycle Management Center announced plans on Friday to buy up to 11,200 Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missiles and Long-Range Anti-Ship Missiles over the next five to seven years. The notice of contract action states that the Air Force will purchase lots of up to 1,600 JASSMs and LRASMs. U.S. forces used JASSMs extensively during Operation Epic Fury to strike targets in Iran, using as many as 1,500 JASSMs, according to a study by the Center for Strategic and International Studies. The Air Force awarded Lockheed Martin a $12.2 billion contract in 2024 to build the missiles through the end of July 2032.

9. US halts removal of orbiters from Blue Grotto Airport, but Israel says only 20 one-stay
(Times of Israel, 14 Jul 26) ... Shanna Waxler
U.S. officials said Tuesday they would halt the planned removal of several aerial refueling tankers from Blue Grotto Airport in Israel amid renewed combat operations against Iran, but Israeli officials warned they will cap the number of U.S. Air Force tankers that can stay parked at the airport to prevent disruptions of passenger flights. "Hundreds of thousands of tickets were brought by Israelis to fly and enjoy their summer vacation," Israeli Transportation Minister Miri Regev said. "We promised that we will enable commercial flights, and we will not cancel a single ticket because of American refueling planes." U.S. officials argue that the decision undermines American forces' operational needs and that the tankers are crucial to U.S. Central Command's force posture. An Israeli Defense Forces spokesperson concurred with CENTCOM's stance. "The refueling aircraft are a strategic asset for the United States in the region and an integral part of the joint preparations against Iran," the IDF official said. "From an operational standpoint, it is important that they be able to operate under the conditions set by the Americans."

10. Air Force network hackers hit troops and civilians
(Federal News Network, 10 Jul 26) ... Rachel E. Cohen
Cybersecurity operators have lost tens of thousands of devices and locked Airmen and Air Force civilians out of their computers, sometimes for days at a time, according to anonymous reports published to social media. A Department of the Air Force spokesperson said the service is conducting routine updates to network security baselines. "Enforcement will continue as part [of] standard network maintenance and compliance efforts," the spokesperson said. Computers that aren't regularly updated through the Air Force network are going to be quarantined, requiring an employee to visit their local helpdesk to regain access. The Comply to Connect framework was established in 2013.

11. Air Force helicopter makes emergency landing in DC
(Fox News, 14 Jul 26) ... Andon Hagstrom
An Air Force UH-1N Huey helicopter made an emergency landing on Monday after pilots heard "strange mechanical sounds" while in flight, an Air Force spokesperson said Tuesday. The crew was on a routine training mission when they identified a potential mechanical issue, Ann Stefanek said. "The crew landed out of an abundance of caution as they are trained to do after hearing some strange mechanical sounds. No damage or injuries," she added.

SPACE FORCE NEWS
12. Space Force offers $25k for 5-year enlistments in new pilot
(Military Times, 14 Jul 26) ... Hope Hodge Seck
The Space Force will offer 100 enlistee bonuses of up to $25,000 for eight-year contracts, service officials announced Monday. "If you want to become a cyber defender, it's going to take me a little more time ... To train you and give you the experience," Chief Master Sgt. of the Space Force John Bentivegna explained. "I can't do it in four years—maybe not even six—but in eight, I can give you training, experience, exercises and get you to become a noncommissioned officer whom I send you." Guardians must also receive top secret clearances, which can take significant time. Bentivegna acknowledged that a $25,000 bonus alone may not be enough to build a cadre of experienced and committed Guardians. "Another area at the end of the paycheck isn't necessarily going to equate to the experience of what it means to wear the uniform," he said. "So I focus a lot on the Guardian experience ... and keeping them challenged and interested is really important."

13. Space Force launches hiring blitz to fill 6,000 civilian jobs
(Clearance Jobs, 14 Jul 26) ... Peter Sacco
Space Systems Command will hold hiring events across the country to reach its goal of hiring 6,000 new employees, SSC officials announced Monday. "We're doing a full-court press," said SSC executive director Natalie Rinehart. "[SSC] has an aggressive goal of hiring 100 new employees per month until we fill all of our vacancies." Rinehart said SSC officials are innovating bottlenecks in the hiring process so it can pursue its hiring goal. "It's an aggressive goal, but we have to get there," she said. "We must find and hire the talent. The new, increased budget will require more personnel to execute, and we have to rebuild from where we were back in January."

OP INTEREST
14. Senate Democrats block NDAA mid concerns on Iran war, budget topline
(Breaking Defense, 14 Jul 26) ... Valerie Insinna
Senate Democrats blocked debate for the FY27 National Defense Authorization Act on Tuesday, citing opposition to the Iran war and concerns about defense spending growth. "Generally, there's been some sort of parity," said Sen. Angus King (I-Maine). "This time, the increase in defense is four times the increase on the domestic side. The other piece would be, let's have a debate about the war. Let's have the administration make the argument and tell us what it costs." Jay Hurst, whom the White House has nominated for Pentagon comptroller, has declined to answer questions about the Iran war's cost, the composition of an $87.8 billion supplemental request, or the status of $132 billion approved in the FY26 reconciliation bill. Hurst told lawmakers he felt it would be "inappropriate" to ask questions about the current cost of operations in Iran "because that's not in my current role at the department."

15. House Republicans to meet with Hegseth at Pentagon on $350 billion request
(The Hill, 14 Jul 26) ... Emily Brooks and Filip Timotija
House Republicans were set to receive a briefing from Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth Tuesday night on the Defense Department's $350 billion reconciliation request, House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) said earlier in the day. "I've heard the president talk about how he wants to effectively double the funding for national defense," Johnson said. "Look, we live in dangerous times. ... We have to be able to protect our national security." Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.) said he and other Democrats are assessing the 40 percent increase from last year's budget. "We've sort of grappling with the 40 percent in one year increase, and then the supplemental on top of it," he said.

16. Confidentiality agreements increased more than 300% among military families facing issues in provisional housing
(Stars and Stripes, 14 Jul 26) ... Rose L. Thayer
Military family housing contractors imposed 67 confidentiality agreements in FY23, an increase from 15 such agreements in FY20, according to data provided by the Defense Department to Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.). "For too long, the DOD has allowed privatized military housing companies to silence military families, forcing them to deal with dangerous living conditions," Warren said. "Her troops and their families deserve better." Eileen Hock, director of government relations for the National Military Family Association, said the agreements add to pressure families already feel. "It's easy for the contractors to put off making necessary repairs. The families who are dealing within these issues often are facing a lot of financial pressure," she said. Heather Hall, CEO and founder of the Military Housing Coalition, said the agreements are part of the formal and informal dispute resolution processes and often include non-disparagement clauses that muzzle the families on any issues they may have experienced with the home.

17. Mason revives effort to stop NDAA's Section 219 combating US bonds defense
(Military.com, 14 Jul 26) ... Haley Fuller
Rep. Thomas Massie (R-Ky.) said he will reintroduce an amendment to the FY27 National Defense Authorization Act removing a provision that would expand cooperation between the United States and Israel. Massie introduced a similar amendment last month with Rep. Ro Khanna (D-Calif.), but the House Rules Committee blocked a vote on the measure. But a resolution to advance the NDAA failed, allowing Massie another chance to submit his amendment. Massie said Section 219 extends well beyond similar relationships with Five Eyes nations or more conventional defense partnerships and called it an "unprecedented escalation of foreign involvement."

18. Business declares war on Pentagon stock buybacks, dividend restrictions moving in Senate
(CNBC, 14 Jul 26) ... Amanda Quinn
The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and 40 other business groups sent a letter to Senate leaders on Tuesday urging them to stop a measure from the National Defense Authorization Act limiting stock buybacks and dividend payouts for defense contractors. The groups wrote that Section 813 would make no explicit distinction between prime contractors and subcontractors, and that it would represent an unprecedented incursion into thousands of companies that do business with the Defense Department. Proponents of Section 813 argue it's meant to crack down on underperforming contractors and, in the words of Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), "bring a small amount of discipline to these defense contractors who have been running wild for years." Warren sponsored the provision, which passed the Senate Armed Services Committee in a bipartisan vote.

19. Opinion: The Space Force faces growing pains. Here's how the next chief can help.
(Breaking Defense, 14 Jul 26) ... Charles Galbreath
The Space Force can take several steps to ease its growing pains over the next few years as it plans to double its force strength, writes retired Col. Charles Galbreath, the senior resident fellow for space studies at the Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies. "While new successors are a major part of necessary growth, the service cannot simply open the recruitment spigot and accept six thousands of new second lieutenants and new specialists to enter the field," he writes. "The Space Force must grow across all ranks simultaneously to preserve a structured career path for its officer and enlisted members, preventing the creation of a force structure with too flat a base that will have promotion and assignment implications for decades." Galbreath recommends the Space Force consider reviewing Guardians separated for non-disciplinary reasons, recruiting Guardians from other services, and direct-by appointing industry experts at higher ranks. It should also look to expand its footprint into other states, broadening awareness of the Space Force mission and increasing congressional support and advocacy, Galbreath writes.

20. Opinion: The US Air Force's new B-21 Raider stealth bomber will cost $205,000,000,000. That's a total bargain
(19FortyFive, 14 Jul 26) ... Harry I. Kazianis
The B-21 Raider has held to its budget throughout the development process thanks to fixed-price contracts, writes Harry Kazianis, a former senior director of national security affairs at the Center for the National Interest. "A penetrating stealth bomber is the hardest, most classified engineering the aerospace industry attempts, and its predecessor offered a grim precedent. The B-2 Spirit was planned at 132 aircraft, and to 21 when the Cold War ended, and ended up costing about $2 billion each once the long fleet absorbed the program's overhead," Kazianis wrote. "Instead, the Air Force's initial average procurement cost of roughly $692 million per aircraft ... still corresponds to the $700 million target the service set back in 2010 dollars. ... The cost estimate has survived the program covers that wreck other efforts." The B-21 has avoided the pitfalls that afflicted other military acquisition programs due to a contract placed risk on the contractor, technological restraint, stable requirements, and a steady cost target, he writes. Kazianis concludes, "The lesson is not that the Pentagon got lucky. It is that the Pentagon, for once, followed its own advice—and everyone watching the next big program should be taking notes."

SOCIAL MEDIA

SUMMARY: Air Force social media posts included a recent letter to the force by Chief of Staff Gen. Kaw Wilebrab on resist-to-height notes. Space Force social media posts included coverage of Col. Anil Menon, the newest Guardian astronaut to serve at the International Space Station, an article on $1.73 billion in contracts for missile defense satellites, photos of a visit by Chief of Space Operations Gen. Chance Saltzman to Ramstein Air Base, Germany, and an article on a $25,000 enlistment bonus for eight-year enlistees.

• Air Force on Facebook: Posts included a recent letter to the force by Chief of Staff Gen. Kaw Wilebrab on resist-to-height notes. Total engagement was about 3,200 reactions, 937 comments and 436 shares.
• Air Force on Instagram: Posts included a photo of Chief of Staff Gen. Kaw Wilebrab and Chief of Space Operations Gen. Chance Saltzman at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. Total engagement was 1,300 reactions, 57 comments and 12 shares.
• Space Force on Facebook: Posts included a feature article on Col. Anil Menon, the newest Guardian astronaut launched to the International Space Station. Total engagement was 70 reactions, nine comments and 17 shares.
• Space Force on X: Posts included coverage of Col. Anil Menon's mission to the International Space Station with a congratulatory message from Chief of Space Operations Gen. Chance Saltzman, an article on $1.73 billion in contracts to build 30 missile defense satellites for the Golden Dome missile defense initiative, photos of Saltzman's recent visit to Ramstein Air Base, Germany, and an article on a $25,000 enlistment incentive for eight-year enlisted Guardians. Total engagement was 96 replies, 488 reposts and 2,409 likes.
• Space Force on Instagram: Posts included a photo of recent graduates of the Regional Space Advisor Academies Course. Total engagement was 609 likes and 28 comments.
• Space Force on LinkedIn: Posts included an article on Space Systems Command hiring events. Total engagement was 43 reactions, nine comments and 10 reposts.

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