



THE DET 520 DISPATCH

A resource for alumni and supporters

DETACHMENT NEWSLETTER — SEPTEMBER 2026

Greetings from Det 520!

Welcome to the first issue of The Det 520 Dispatch! This new initiative is designed to keep Det 520 alumni and supporters connected with what is happening at the Detachment. For alumni, we hope to strengthen your ongoing connection with the program and provide a window into how Det 520 continues to grow and evolve. Each month, we'll highlight current training activities, accomplishments from the Cadet Wing, and major news involving our cadets, cadre, and the broader Cornell AFROTC and military community.

Summer Update from the Cadets

This summer, C/Randall — Wing Chief of Staff, a Civil Engineering senior, and an Intel-Officer select — interned with SpaceX's Construction & Facilities team in Hawthorne, California, supporting facilities used by Starship, Raptor, and Starlink production. He took ownership of more than 15 building improvement projects representing roughly \$700,000 in design and construction work, coordinating contractors and adapting as priorities shifted in real time. The internship gave him a firsthand look at how innovation in the commercial space sector translates into greater launch capacity and new capabilities for future Air Force and Space Force missions.



C/Randall in front of SpaceX's Falcon 9 booster B1019, the booster from SpaceX's first successful landing after an orbital mission.

Elsewhere this summer, C/Fujimoto — Cadet Wing Commander — and C/Tama — Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Squadron Commander — interned with the Information and Spectrum Warfare Directorate at the Air Force Research Laboratory, working onsite in the Laser Division at Kirtland AFB in Albuquerque, NM. They supported modeling and experimentation efforts behind the Air Force's development of laser weapon systems. Their mentor, 1st Lt Koby Battema (Det 520, Class of 2023) and current Air Force developmental engineer, opened doors to a tour of the 58th Special Operations Wing Maintenance Squadron, two classified intelligence briefings, and conversations with Space Force officers. The internship gave both cadets a firsthand look at the 61D (Physicist) and 62E (Developmental Engineer) career fields, alongside the value of full immersion in an active-duty unit.



C/Tama (front row, leftmost) with the Air Force Research Laboratory team at Kirtland AFB, New Mexico.

New Cadet Orientation (NCO)

On August 16th, C/Melton and C/Martini welcomed nearly 30 new cadets to Detachment 520. Cadets got a firsthand look at cadet life: completing their first Group Leadership Project, learning basic marching, and picking up Air Force customs and courtesies. Many also took the Oath of Enlistment, a meaningful first step in their AFROTC journey. It was rewarding to watch them take their first steps in the Corps of Cadets, and we're excited to see how they grow over the next four years.



C/Schuette taking the Oath of Enlistment, administered by Major Novotny.



New cadets navigate a simulated minefield during a Group Leadership Problem (GLP).

Welcome BBQ

We concluded August with a BBQ on the Ag Quad. This event served as a great opportunity for new cadets to meet others across the detachment in a casual environment. Special thanks to C/Shegogue for manning the grill and to C/Tama, the organizer of the event!



Det 520 cadets gather on the Ag Quad for the Welcome BBQ.

Cadet Spotlight: Cadet Aniket Martins



Meet C/Martins, a senior studying Mechanical Engineering commissioning into the Space Force. He serves as Commander of i5 Space, the undergraduate organization part of Space Training and Readiness Command to prepare the next generation of Space Force officers: leading squadrons and training programs at detachments across the country. A Meinig Family Cornell National Scholar and Laidlaw Scholar, C/Martins was also awarded a Boren Scholarship to spend a semester in Taiwan studying Mandarin.

Alumni Spotlight: Kenneth Kupchak



From Det 520 to a long career of military and professional service, Kenneth Kupchak '64, JD '71, first served as an Air Force meteorologist, including as a Weather Briefing Officer for Seventh Air Force in Vietnam. Today, he is a Director at Damon Key Leong Kupchak Hastert in Honolulu, where his practice focuses on construction, real estate, and commercial law. He was named Best Lawyers' 2025 Honolulu "Lawyer of the Year" for Eminent Domain & Condemnation Law and was again selected for the 2026 edition of The Best Lawyers in America across several practice areas.

Thank You!

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