Dr. Lorenz Meier
CEO of Auterion

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Mr.Clem Newton-Brown
CEO- Skyportz

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Semion Dukhan
Head of Europe for
SK Group

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Senior Executive Development Programme on Compliance, Safety & Regulations in Aviation

Onsite: Hamburg, Germany | 12th-15th January 2026

Programme Speakers

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Founding Director, Dhirubhai Ambani University- School of Law

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Founder and Head, Copernicus Strategic Consulting CSC GmbH
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Founding Faculty Member and Head of Executive Education at Dhirubhai Ambani University- School of Law

Sivadath Madhu Menon
Head of Aviation Law and Management Vertical at Dhirubhai Ambani University- School of Law

Key Topics

- EASA's Certification System and New Technologies Certification Challenges
- Legal Framework Governing International Civil Aviation: Key Conventions and Organisations
- Liability and Claims in Aviation : Legal and Regulatory Perspectives
- Aviation Security

- Export Control and Economic Sanctions in International Aviation
- Aviation Air Accident Investigations: International Best Practices, Safety Protocols, and Airworthiness Compliance with Case Study Analyses

- Environmental Governance in Civil Aviation: Reconciling Sectoral Expansion, Technological Innovation, and Regulatory Compliance
- Airbus Hamburg Final Assembly Line Visit
- Networking dinner with aerospace CEOs, regulators, and policy experts.

**Featured Session: Behind the Dreamliner-
Exclusive Insights from the Boeing 787 Whistleblower.**

For further queries & enrolments, please contact:

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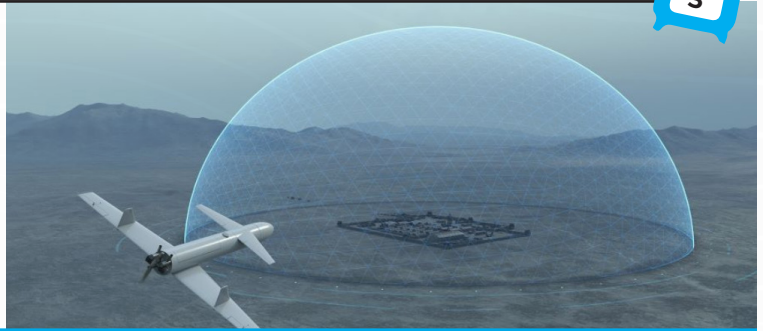✉ shivani_chaudhary@dau.ac.in
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B. KARTIKEYA

Hello Readers,

As we complete six years of Drones World this month, we are opening limited advertorial opportunities for organisations to showcase innovations, programs, and capabilities to our global defence, drone, and advanced air mobility readership—strengthening industry collaboration, visibility, and strategic engagement as we step confidently into our seventh year.

The February 2026 edition of Drones World captures a defining moment for the unmanned systems ecosystem—one where technology maturity, operational deployment, and regulatory alignment are progressing in parallel across defence, civil, and commercial domains. As the global drone industry transitions from experimentation to execution, this issue brings together perspectives, developments, and special features that reflect how unmanned technologies are becoming central to modern aviation, security, and infrastructure.

Our interview section highlights influential voices shaping the next phase of autonomy and digital airspace. Dr. Lorenz Meier, CEO of Auterion, shares insights into scalable autonomy and the growing importance of open architectures in mission-critical operations. Semion Dukhan, Head of Europe at SK Group, discusses the expanding role of integrated technology ecosystems in supporting defence and security requirements. Meanwhile, Mr. Clem Newton-Brown, CEO of Skyportz, outlines how infrastructure planning and vertiport ecosystems will define the success of advanced air mobility and urban drone operations. Together, these conversations underline a clear message: interoperability, reliability, and operational readiness now outweigh conceptual innovation.

Across our Global News coverage, readers will find major industry movements—from cooperative unmanned traffic management trials by AirMarket and OneSky, to secure digital airspace initiatives led by High-Lander and the Technology Innovation Institute. Partnerships such as Trimble with Volatus Aerospace and Unifly with SkeyDrone demonstrate that precision navigation, BVLOS enablement, and real-time airspace coordination are becoming foundational capabilities rather than differentiators.

The Defence & Security segment reflects accelerating investment in counter-UAS, autonomy, and multi-domain operations. Developments involving organizations such as Shield AI, General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, MBDA, and Palladyne AI illustrate how autonomous systems are now embedded within battlefield strategy—from ISR and loyal wingman concepts to swarm coordination and directed-energy counter-drone solutions. These advancements confirm that unmanned platforms are no longer support assets; they are central to force structure and operational doctrine.

This issue's Special Feature focuses on the convergence of AI, secure communications, and immersive control interfaces—highlighted by initiatives such as Vegvisir's immersive command environment and emerging AI-driven autonomy frameworks. Such technologies point toward a future where operators manage complex missions through unified, data-rich decision environments, reducing cognitive load while increasing situational awareness.

As we move deeper into 2026, the trajectory is unmistakable. The unmanned sector is entering an era defined not by promises, but by proven deployment, trusted systems, and measurable outcomes. Drones World remains committed to documenting this transformation—bringing credible insights, industry leadership perspectives, and global developments that shape the future of unmanned aviation.

Kartikeya B.

AIRMARKET AND ONESKY TEST COOPERATIVE UTM SYSTEM IN EDMONTON

A irMarket, a provider of unmanned traffic management (UTM) services, and OneSky, a global UTM platform developer, have teamed up to trial a cooperative airspace management system in Edmonton, Canada. The initiative is focused on advancing the safe integration of unmanned aircraft into controlled and shared airspace, particularly where traditional air traffic and drone operations intersect.

The cooperative UTM test in Edmonton builds on the growing need for coordinated, real-time traffic awareness systems that can support beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) flights, commercial drone logistics, and complex urban air operations. By integrating AirMarket's regional airspace orchestration capabilities with OneSky's scalable traffic management technology, the trial aims to validate data sharing, flight authorisation workflows, and strategic conflict resolution between participating aircraft.

During the programme, AirMarket and OneSky demonstrated how automated data exchange between operators, local authorities, and airspace service providers can enable dynamic flight clearances, efficient route planning, and improved safety margins for all users. The system prototype supports collaborative decision-making, allowing traffic managers to assess live mission profiles and coordinate safely with crewed aircraft operations and other unmanned flights.

Officials involved in the tests highlighted the importance of UTM cooperation in preparing for future high-density drone activity, including package delivery, inspection services, and emergency response missions. The Edmonton trial also served as a real-world platform for evaluating how diverse stakeholders — including regulators, service providers, and commercial operators — can leverage interoperable data systems to enhance situational awareness and operational compliance.

Industry observers see this type of cooperative UTM initiative as essential groundwork for scaling advanced air mobility, particularly as authorities develop regulatory frameworks and performance standards for routine unmanned flights across national airspace systems.

HIGH-LANDER AND ABU DHABI'S TII PARTNER TO OFFER SECURE DIGITAL AIRSPACE SERVICES
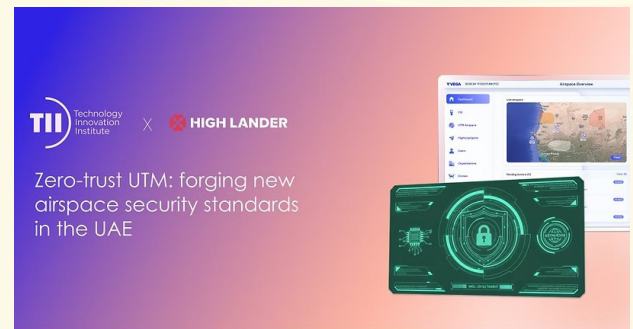
H igh-Lander has entered into a strategic collaboration with the Technology Innovation Institute (TII) in Abu Dhabi to develop and deliver secure, resilient digital airspace management services for unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) and advanced air mobility operations. The partnership aligns with broader efforts to modernize airspace infrastructure using trusted computing and robust cybersecurity frameworks tailored to the unique demands of automated flight environments.

Under the agreement, High-Lander's expertise in secure digital airspace services will be combined with the TII's strengths in applied research and next-generation technologies, including secure system architectures, encrypted data channels, and high-assurance positioning solutions. Together, they intend to create capabilities that improve operational integrity, protect against data tampering and cyber threats, and support safe integration of autonomous systems into national and regional airspace.

Officials leading the initiative emphasised that trust, security, and data protection are foundational for scaling beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) operations, automated logistics, and advanced air mobility services. By embedding security at the core of digital airspace ecosystems, the collaboration aims to reduce vulnerabilities that could impact communications, navigation, surveillance, and command-and-control links between ground stations and unmanned aircraft.

The partnership will explore technologies such as secure multi-party computation, blockchain-based flight data assurance, and AI-driven cyber threat detection — all designed to ensure continuity of UAS operations even in contested or high-risk scenarios. Demonstrations and pilot deployments are expected to be rolled out in controlled environments, supporting both industrial use cases and regulatory compliance initiatives.

Industry analysts note that as unmanned and autonomous flight systems proliferate, combining operational innovation with cybersecurity becomes essential. High-Lander and TII's collaboration is seen as a forward-looking effort to address emerging digital trust challenges and enable safe, scalable, and secure UAS operations in Abu Dhabi and beyond.

TRIMBLE AND VOLATUS AEROSPACE BOOST PRECISION AND SAFETY IN BVLOS DRONE DELIVERIES

Trimble and Volatus Aerospace have announced a collaborative effort to enhance precision and safety for beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) drone delivery operations. The partnership focuses on integrating advanced positioning, navigation, and timing technologies with robust flight systems to support scalable, reliable unmanned logistics services.

Trimble's expertise in high-accuracy global navigation satellite system (GNSS) solutions will be fused with Volatus Aerospace's operational experience in commercial drone missions, including last-mile deliveries, industrial inspections, and remote logistics. The collaboration aims to improve situational awareness, route accuracy, and flight control precision — all of which are critical for routine BVLOS operations that extend beyond the range of direct visual oversight.

A central goal of the partnership is to deliver improved positioning integrity in environments where GPS signals may be degraded or compromised. By combining Trimble's multi-constellation GNSS receivers and augmentation services with Volatus's mission management platforms, operators can achieve tighter navigation tolerances, enhanced redundancy, and greater confidence in automated flight paths. This is especially relevant for densely populated or geographically challenging regions where delivery efficiency must be balanced with strict safety margins.

Volatus Aerospace has been scaling its drone delivery services for clients across healthcare, logistics, and industrial sectors, and sees high-precision

navigation as a key enabler for expanding BVLOS missions while meeting regulatory requirements. Trimble's technology provides additional layers of resilience, helping to mitigate position uncertainty and support compliance with evolving airspace rules.

Industry observers note that as BVLOS flights become more commonplace, partnerships that

blend advanced navigation systems with operational expertise will be vital for building trust with regulators, customers, and community stakeholders. By elevating both precision and safety, the Trimble–Volatus collaboration represents a strategic step toward wider adoption of automated drone delivery services in complex, real-world environments.

SPACE42 COMPLETES EUROPE'S FIRST LICENSED HIGH-ALTITUDE PLATFORM FLIGHT

Space42, through its subsidiary Mira Aerospace, has successfully conducted Europe's first licensed flight of a High Altitude Platform System (HAPS) under civilian regulatory approval. The milestone marks a major step forward for stratospheric aviation and the integration of persistent aerial platforms into controlled airspace.

The flight was carried out using the ApusNeo18, a solar-powered aircraft designed for long-endurance operations in the stratosphere. Operated from the Fuerteventura Technology Park in Spain's Canary Islands, the mission formed part of a phased test programme that will progressively increase altitude and flight duration in subsequent sorties.

The initial operation demonstrated the platform's ability to operate safely within Europe's

civilian aviation framework while delivering high-resolution geospatial data in near real time. The aircraft is equipped with optical and infrared sensors capable of supporting applications such as wildfire detection, environmental monitoring, and disaster response. The mission was conducted in support of a wildfire prevention and response initiative, highlighting the role HAPS can play in strengthening situational awareness over wide areas.

HAPS platforms operate at altitudes above

conventional aircraft but below satellites, offering persistent coverage, rapid deployment, and cost-effective data collection. Officials involved in the programme noted that licensed operations represent a critical step toward routine commercial use of stratospheric platforms for government, environmental, and infrastructure applications.

The successful flight underscores growing momentum behind HAPS technology in Europe and demonstrates how regulated, long-endurance aerial systems can complement satellites and crewed aircraft. As additional test flights are completed, Space42 and Mira Aerospace aim to expand operational capabilities and pave the way for broader adoption of stratospheric services across multiple sectors.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY LAUNCHES NEW COUNTER-UAS AGENCY

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has established a new dedicated agency focused on counter-unmanned aircraft systems (C-UAS), centralizing efforts to detect, deter, and respond to unauthorized and potentially malicious drone activity. This initiative represents a significant step in strengthening national airspace security as unmanned aircraft proliferate across both public and private airspace.

The new agency's mission is to integrate counter-UAS capabilities across homeland security functions, including critical infrastructure protection, border security, emergency response, and large-scale public events. By consolidating expertise and technology under a unified command, DHS aims to improve situational awareness, streamline response protocols, and ensure rapid decision-making when unauthorized drones are detected in sensitive airspace.

Officials leading the effort emphasize that the evolving threat landscape — including the increased availability of inexpensive drones, the possibility of drone misuse, and sophisticated autonomous capabilities — requires a coordinated federal response. The agency will work closely with federal partners, state and local law enforcement, and industry stakeholders to develop robust detection and mitigation systems that are both effective and respectful of civil liberties.

The new C-UAS agency is expected to advance research and deployment of layered sensor networks, radar systems, radio frequency detection tools, and integrated command-and-control platforms capable of distinguishing benign from non-compliant drone activity. Additionally, it will support training programs and operational frameworks designed to enhance readiness across jurisdictions.

Industry analysts view the establishment of the agency as a recognition of the urgent need for scalable counter-UAS infrastructure as commercial drone operations — including logistics, inspection, and urban air mobility services — become more widespread. By centralizing policy, resources, and expertise, DHS aims to improve national resilience and ensure safe coexistence between unmanned aircraft and crewed aviation throughout U.S. airspace.

INDIA'S APOLLO MICROSYSTEMS GAINS ACCESS TO DRDO LASER COUNTER-UAS RESEARCH
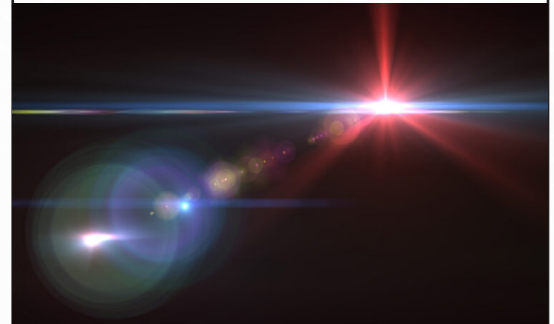
India's Apollo Microsystems, a developer of defence and aerospace technologies, has been granted access to advanced laser counter-unmanned aircraft systems (C-UAS) research conducted by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). The move is expected to accelerate the company's efforts to develop indigenous laser-based systems capable of detecting, tracking, and neutralizing hostile drones.

Under the collaborative arrangement, Apollo Microsystems will work closely with DRDO scientists to apply insights from classified research projects into field-ready solutions. These efforts span directed energy technologies, high-precision targeting systems, and integrated counter-UAS architectures that are designed to engage unmanned aerial threats with minimal collateral impact. Government officials emphasised that such partnerships strengthen the national defence industrial base while reducing reliance on imported technologies.

Laser counter-UAS systems use highly focused beams of energy to disrupt, disable, or destroy unauthorized drones at distance. Compared with conventional kinetic countermeasures, laser-based approaches offer potential advantages in speed, precision, and cost-per-engagement, particularly against swarming or autonomous UAS threats. Access to DRDO's research gives Apollo Microsystems a valuable head start in mastering the complex integration of optics, beam control, and power management required for operational performance.

The collaboration also aligns with broader strategic priorities to enhance India's C-UAS capabilities in both military and critical infrastructure domains. As drone usage expands worldwide — in commercial, recreational, and asymmetric threat environments — national security planners are increasingly focused on scalable systems that can protect sensitive airspace while ensuring minimal disruption to civilian operations.

GA-ASI AND USN TEST EXPANDED SONOBUOY DISPENSING SYSTEM FOR MQ-9B SEAGUARDIAN

General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI) and the U.S. Navy continue to expand the Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) capability of the MQ-9B SeaGuardian® Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS). Flight test was performed on December 17 and featured Sonobuoy Dispensing System (SDS) pods, more than previously tested, doubling the number of sonobuoys available.

"Expanding sonobuoy capacity, including Multi-static Active Coherent (MAC) technology for SeaGuardian, has been an integral part of our advanced ASW strategy to broaden and enhance search areas," said GA-ASI President David R. Alexander. "The wider maritime coverage our MQ-9B's ASW capability provides is extremely valuable to our customers."

Sonobuoys are naval sensors that drop from an aircraft into the ocean and help detect submarines. The SeaGuardian deployed AN/SSQ-36 Bathythermal, AN/SSQ-53G Directional Frequency Analysis and Recording (DIFAR) (passive), and AN/SSQ-62F Directional Command Activated Sonobuoy System (DICASS) (active) buoys. This was the first time Multi-static Active Coherent (MAC) buoys have been dispensed from an uncrewed aircraft. The MAC buoys are better at detecting submarines over

large areas and require fewer buoys compared to using DIFAR and DICASS.

Sponsored by the U.S. Navy, the flight tests were specifically aimed at certifying the SDS. This flight testing supports the Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet's Operational Evaluation deployment to SEVENTH Fleet and enjoyed additional support and governmental supervision from the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD) AIRWorks.

Upon completion of the testing and data review, the U.S. Navy is expected to give GA-ASI deployment flight clearance for ASW operations using MQ-9B SeaGuardian in January 2026.

SeaGuardian has also been used by the U.S. Navy in various recent exercises, including Northern Edge, Integrated Battle Problem, RIMPAC, and Group Sail.

HARMATTAN AI'S $200 MILLION SERIES B LED BY DASSAULT AVIATION

Dassault Aviation and Harmattan AI announced a strategic partnership to accelerate the integration of controlled autonomy and AI technologies into combat aviation systems. As part of this collaboration, Dassault Aviation is leading Harmattan AI's $200 million Series B funding round.

Harmattan AI has been awarded multiple Programs of Record by the French and UK Ministries of Defence for its autonomous systems portfolio and is now scaling globally in response to growing demand. The proceeds from this investment round will be used to expand the deployment of AI-enabled missions across new operational theaters, extend Harmattan AI's product offering into new domains and scale industrial manufacturing of its ISR, drone interception, and electronic warfare platforms.

"Dassault Aviation has always placed technological excellence and sovereignty at the heart of its values. This

partnership with Harmattan AI reflects our commitment to integrating high-value autonomy into the next generation of combat air systems. By joining forces with a fast-moving and innovative company, we reinforce our ability to deliver the advanced capabilities required by our armed forces in the decades ahead," said Eric Trappier, Chairman and CEO of Dassault Aviation. This partnership will support the development of embedded AI capabilities by Harmattan AI within Dassault Aviation's future air combat systems (Rafale F5 and UCAS),

particularly for the control of unmanned aerial systems. This collaboration supports an overarching strategy to integrate sovereign, controlled and monitored AI into Dassault Aviation combat systems.

"This partnership with Dassault Aviation marks a decisive step in the emergence of a new generation of autonomous defense systems. Dassault Aviation's trust and leadership accelerate our mission: delivering scalable, sovereign AI capabilities to allied forces. By combining frontier AI with world-class military aviation expertise, we are shaping the future of collaborative air combat," said Mouad M'Ghari, CEO and Co-Founder of Harmattan AI. Dassault Aviation will provide its longstanding expertise in system architecture for complex military platforms, integration of mission systems in high intensity operational environments and support for international business development through its established network.

HII ODYSSEY ADVANCED AUTONOMY CONNECTS REMUS AND ROMULUS, ENABLING INTEGRATED MULTI-DOMAIN UNMANNED OPERATIONS

H II recently demonstrated the capabilities of the HII ROMULUS family of AI-enabled unmanned surface vessels (USVs), powered by HII's Odyssey Autonomous Control System (ACS), with a focus on the ROMULUS 7 variant.

ROMULUS 7 is a seven-foot, man-portable USV designed for expeditionary and special operations missions. During the test, its two payload bays supported mission equipment configured to validate surface–subsurface collaboration, leveraging the proven REMUS modular architecture.

At the conclusion of the test mission, ROMULUS 7 operated in concert with an HII REMUS unmanned underwater vehicle (UUV), validating coordinated operations between surface and subsurface autonomous systems. REMUS's reliability, modularity, and endurance enabled sustained test execution across realistic operational conditions.

A key objective of the test was the use of ROMULUS 7 as a mobile surface gateway. In this role, the USV enabled real-time reach-back to the operations center and high-rate data exfiltration from the REMUS UUV, extending operational reach while preserving stealth and autonomy.

Both platforms ran HII's Odyssey autonomy, with the mission planned, monitored, and managed through the Odyssey Mission user interface. This common autonomy backbone was central to the test, enabling seamless coordination across domains without operator burden.

The test also validated the standard ROMULUS 7 communications and sensing suite, including acoustic communications for UUV collaboration, cameras, Wi-Fi, Starlink, MANET radio, and GPS — confirming its effectiveness as a resilient, networked force multiplier when paired with REMUS.

ELBIT SYSTEMS EXPANDS IN EUROPE WITH FULL ACQUISITION OF UTACS

STRENGTHENING EUROPE'S DEFENCE

Elbit Systems Expands with Full Acquisition of UTACS

E lbit Systems UK has finalized the full acquisition of UAV Tactical Systems Ltd. (UTACS), which follows the receipt of all required regulatory and government approvals. Over nearly two decades, UTACS has supplied dozens of advanced tactical uncrewed aerial systems (UAS) to the British Army as well as to international customers, including the United Nations and NATO member countries.

Full ownership will allow Elbit Systems UK to further develop UTACS as a leading and innovative British and regional hub for the design, development and support of advanced UAS, leveraging Elbit Systems' global expertise and technological leadership in the uncrewed domain - a growing segment worldwide. The company will focus on serving the needs of European and NATO customers, continuing to deliver its existing programmes while retaining its highly skilled British workforce and engineering excellence, strengthening the UK's defence industrial base and supporting customers across the UK, NATO and Europe.

Bezhalel (Butzi) Machlis, President and CEO of Elbit Systems: "Elbit Systems continues to expand its presence in the UK to meet the growing demand for our products and technologies. As a global leader in UAS, with customers across Europe, NATO, and beyond, this acquisition further strengthens our engineering and manufacturing capabilities across the continent, reinforcing our long term commitment to the UK and the wider European defence industry."

EOS TO ACQUIRE MARSS, EXPANDING COUNTER-UAS AND SURVEILLANCE CAPABILITIES
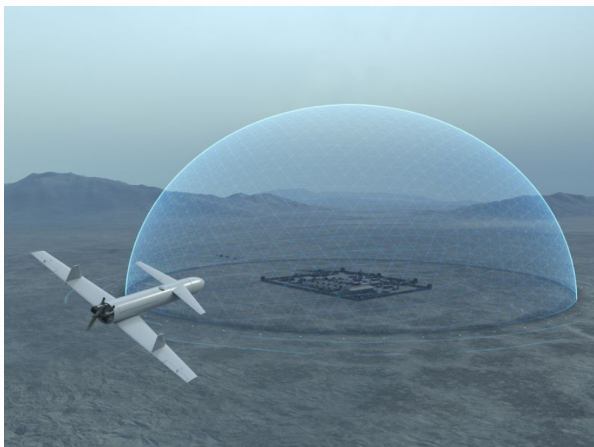
EOS Defense Systems, a provider of advanced detection and surveillance technologies, has announced an agreement to acquire MARSS, a specialist in radar, electro-optical sensors, and integrated situational awareness solutions. The move is positioned to broaden EOS's portfolio across counter-unmanned aircraft systems (C-UAS), airspace monitoring, and wide-area domain awareness for both military and civilian customers.

Under the acquisition agreement, EOS will bring MARSS's radar and sensor expertise into its existing product ecosystem, creating a more comprehensive platform capable of detecting, tracking, and classifying a wide range of aerial and surface threats. MARSS technologies are known for their performance in coastal, port, and critical infrastructure environments, where real-time situational awareness and integrated data fusion are essential.

The combined entity aims to deliver enhanced C-UAS solutions that integrate advanced radar, long-range electro-optical systems, and software-defined processing to support layered detection and tracking. This approach is intended to improve early warning, autonomous threat assessment, and coordinated response capabilities for security forces, government agencies, and private sector operators.

Industry analysts view the acquisition as part of a broader trend of consolidation in the counter-UAS market, driven by rising demand for systems that can address increasingly sophisticated unmanned aerial threats. As drones become more prevalent in both commercial and contested environments, governments and large organisations are seeking integrated solutions capable of operating across multiple domains and sensor types.

EOS leadership has stated that combining MARSS's sensor hardware with its own system architecture will accelerate the delivery of scalable, interoperable C-UAS and surveillance offerings. The acquisition is expected to enhance both companies' reach into new markets and bolster their ability to support customers requiring comprehensive airspace and coastal domain awareness.

AIRSPACE-LINK LAUNCHES USER-DEFINED AIRSPACE ALERTS FOR DRONES
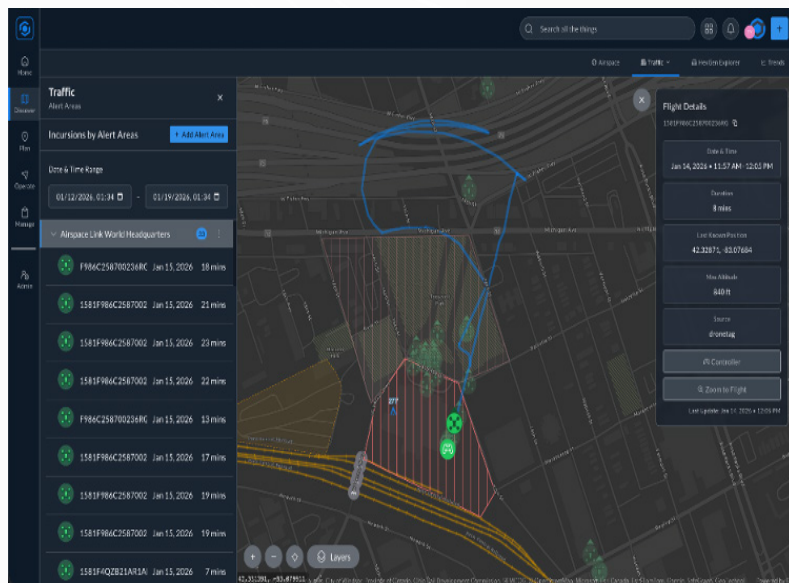

AirspaceLink has rolled out a new alerting feature that enables operators to monitor and receive notifications when drones enter user-defined airspace zones. The capability is designed to enhance situational awareness and safety for both recreational and commercial unmanned aircraft system (UAS) operations.

The alert system allows users to create custom geofenced areas — including temporary flight restrictions, sensitive sites, event perimeters, or infrastructure zones — and configure automated notifications triggered by drone penetration. Once a drone crosses into one of these defined areas, the system generates an alert to designated recipients, helping stakeholders track and respond to potential airspace incursions in real time.

Airspace-Link's approach leverages its existing data services, which aggregate flight plans, live telemetry, and regulatory airspace information, and overlays it with user-created boundaries. This enables operators, site managers, and safety officials to visualise both planned drone activity and ad-hoc entries into areas of concern. The alerts can be dispatched via email, text message, or platform dashboards, facilitating situational awareness across organisations with differing operational needs.

The new feature has applications in multiple domains, from industrial and construction site safety to event management, critical infrastructure protection, and emergency response coordination. Organisations responsible for large facilities, utility networks, or sensitive locations can use the alerting capability to keep better tabs on unmanned flights near their assets, helping to mitigate risk and improve compliance with local restrictions.

Industry observers note that as drone traffic increases, tools that help manage and monitor airspace interactions in a granular way are becoming essential. Customised alerting functions provide an additional layer of safety and operational control, especially in mixed-use environments where crewed and uncrewed aircraft may operate in proximity.

By providing real-time visibility into drone activity relative to user-defined zones, Airspace-Link's alerting feature supports proactive safety management and stitches together data sources in a scalable way for diverse users.

UNIFLY AND SKEYDRONE LAUNCH MAJOR UPGRADE TO ANTWERP PORT UTM SYSTEM

Unifly has teamed up with SkeyDrone to deliver a significant software upgrade to the unmanned traffic management (UTM) system used at Port of Antwerp, enhancing capabilities for safe, coordinated drone operations across the busy logistics hub. The improved system aims to support a wider range of unmanned aircraft missions — from surveillance and inspection to cargo logistics — within one of Europe's most dynamic port environments.

The overhaul introduces new functionalities designed to streamline flight authorisation, improve airspace situational awareness, and strengthen data sharing between operators and airspace stakeholders. Port of Antwerp's UTM now provides enhanced real-time visibility into drone movements, integrates dynamic geofencing features, and offers automated tools for risk-based operational planning — enabling both civil and industrial users to manage traffic more efficiently.

A key element of the upgrade is the system's ability to support complex, coordinated missions involving multiple drones and human-piloted aircraft, reducing the likelihood of conflicts and improving operational predictability. Users can now benefit from advanced flight plan validation, conflict detection alerts, and a more intuitive operational dashboard that reflects changing conditions within the port's airspace.

Port of Antwerp has been at the forefront of UTM innovation in Europe, using digital airspace orchestration to manage diverse aviation needs around shipping terminals, warehouses, and industrial facilities. The collaboration between Unifly and SkeyDrone further solidifies the port's role as a testbed for scalable unmanned operations, particularly in environments with high traffic density and stringent safety requirements.

Industry observers note that improvements like these are critical for accelerating safe integration of drones into commercial ecosystems, especially where automation and logistics intersect. By combining Unifly's regulatory and software expertise with SkeyDrone's operational insights, the upgraded UTM system is positioned to support routine drone flights while paving the way for more advanced, data-driven airspace services.

GA-ASI AND BARZAN HOLDINGS SIGN MOU

General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI) –– the world leader in unmanned systems – and Barzan Holdings, Qatar's national defence and security leader, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to collaborate on the development of advanced Battle Management software capabilities. The signing took place on Monday during the Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference (DIMDEX).

The MOU provides a framework for cooperation between GA-ASI, GA-Intelligence, and Barzan Holdings to develop software solutions that enhance theater-level situational awareness and enable the efficient processing, correlation, and dissemination of intelligence. These capabilities are intended to support faster, higher-quality decision-making in complex, multi-domain operational environments.

For General Atomics, the agreement underscores the strategic importance of collaboration with Barzan Holdings and the State of Qatar. The partnership reflects a shared commitment to long-term cooperation, technological innovation, and the advancement of interoperable command-and-control solutions aligned with modern defense and aerospace requirements.

In addition to its best-in-class unmanned aircraft systems, GA-ASI is a premiere developer of airborne Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) systems, while GA-Intelligence has the ability to take hundreds of sources of commercial data, including data provided from GA-ASI's unmanned systems, to produce a comprehensive operating picture.

"Collaboration with Barzan and Qatar is central to GA's approach to delivering operationally relevant, next-generation capabilities," said a GA-ASI CEO Linden Blue. "By combining GA's expertise in mission systems and autonomy with Barzan's regional insight and defense focus, we are positioned to advance battle management solutions that significantly improve situational awareness and intelligence exploitation."

DESTINUS COMPLETES ACQUISITION OF DAEDALEAN, ACCELERATING NEXT-GEN AI FOR DEFENSE AND CIVIL AVIATION

Destinus Group BV has completed the acquisition of Daedalean AG, the Zürich-based leader in advanced AI systems for aviation, in a transaction valued at CHF 180 million (approximately USD 225 million). Daedalean will operate within Destinus as a core hub for AI engineering, autonomy research, and advanced perception technologies.

Daedalean's team and technology will continue to support the development of AI for civilian aviation, including safety-critical autonomy, pilot assistance, and next-generation navigation and perception systems. At the same time, integration into Destinus significantly accelerates the deployment of defense-focused AI applications. These include GNSS-denied navigation for contested environments, advanced perception and seeker technologies for interceptors, cruise missiles, and one-way effectors, as well as mission planning and autonomous decision-making for high-speed defense platforms. They also cover swarming and multi-agent coordination for mass-deployed unmanned systems, as well as sensor fusion with onboard AI reasoning for resilient battlefield operations.

The acquisition strengthens Destinus' ability to deliver sovereign European AI capabilities across its autonomous systems portfolio, reinforcing the company's model of vertically integrated, industrial-scale defense production while supporting both national defense requirements and the long-term modernization of civil aviation.

Bas Gouverneur, formerly CEO of Daedalean, will

Destinus + DAEDALEAN

serve as Chief Military Program Officer, overseeing military programs, advanced autonomy strategy, and the integration of Daedalean's AI stack into Destinus' defense platforms.

Yvonne Gross, previously VP of Finance & Operations at Daedalean, joins Destinus as Director of Operations and Infrastructure, supporting industrial scale-up, operational frameworks, and cross-site coordination across Europe.

Destinus also welcomes Brontë Hamilton as its new Chief Financial Officer. She joins the company as an experienced finance executive and will oversee financial strategy and capital structuring during Destinus' rapid expansion phase.

Mikhail Kokorich, Founder and CEO of Destinus, stated: "Finalizing this acquisition marks an important milestone for Destinus and for Europe's ability to build sovereign, high-performance AI systems for both defense and civil aviation. Daedalean brings exceptional engineering talent and world-class expertise in safety-critical AI. Together, we will accelerate the deployment of next-generation autonomous systems across our interceptor, cruise missile, and UAV platforms, while continuing to advance AI technologies that enhance safety and efficiency in civil aviation. We thank the Daedalean team, investors, and shareholders for their trust, and we are grateful to Walder Wyss for their legal guidance throughout the transaction."

HYDROGEN-POWERED HYBRID RAYBIRD UAV COMPLETES COMBAT MISSIONS IN UKRAINE

A hybrid version of the Skyeton's unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), featuring an electric motor powered by a hydrogen fuel cell, has entered full-scale combat duty with a unit of the Ukrainian Defense Forces. Since December 2025, as part of interagency testing, the unmanned aircraft has been performing missions in the combat zone.

To utilize hydrogen effectively, Skyeton engineers developed a new airframe architecture for the Raybird, adapted for the integration of the new fuel system. The new design was created to distribute space and weight for the hydrogen power system properly and has been optimized for the mass production of this UAV variant.

The Raybird UAS is used for long-range reconnaissance missions. By utilizing hydrogen-

electric propulsion, the platform offers enhanced operational efficiency and environmental benefits for both defense and civilian applications.

he mass-produced Raybird, which runs on an internal combustion engine (ICE), allows for a flight

endurance of over 28 hours. As of January 2026, the hybrid version of the drone can remain airborne for approximately 12 hours.

Roman Knyazhenko, CEO of Skyeton: "We have converted two years of laboratory testing into a new aircraft concept: it is the same class and weight, but a completely redesigned concept based on electric propulsion. Hydrogen fuel is a solution that allows us to combine all the advantages of an electric motor – high reliability, power, and ease of maintenance – with the long-duration continuous flight that is a hallmark of our UAV. Maintaining a balance of these characteristics is vital for us, as the Raybird performs complex deep reconnaissance tasks using high-tech payloads, and the average duration of such missions exceeds 10 hours."

PALLADYNE AI AWARDED USAF CONTRACT TO ADVANCE SWARMING CAPABILITIES FOR INTEGRATED CROSS-DOMAIN OPERATIONS

AFRL
AIR FORCE RESEARCH LABORATORY

Palladyne AI Corp. a developer of artificial intelligence software for robotic platforms in the defense and commercial sectors announced that it has been awarded a contract by the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) to solve one of the most persistent challenges in modern defense operations—how to make different autonomous systems work together as one coordinated team. The "Hierarchical Adaptive Networked Game-Theoretic Integration of Multiple Echelons (HANGTIME)" contract will address this need.

Today, drones, ships, and satellites often operate largely independently, limiting how quickly warfighters can see and respond to threats. HANGTIME will utilize Palladyne AI's patented SwarmOS™ software platform—the defense variant of the Palladyne™ Pilot embodied AI software—as the baseline technology to bridge that gap, connecting disparate systems so they can share intelligence, adapt to changing conditions, and act in sync across domains, including space, air, maritime, and land.

By integrating satellites for the first time, this project also extends Palladyne AI's technology from the ground to orbit, enabling faster, more informed decision-making and coordinated mission execution, turning tactical commanders into strategic commanders by giving them more cross-domain intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities than ever before.

"Our collaboration with AFRL showcases what's next for autonomous operations," said Ben Wolff, President and CEO, Palladyne AI. "This isn't about replacing humans—it's about giving them sharper, faster insight. By connecting satellite, aerial, and ground systems using the patented SwarmOS embodied AI platform as a foundational technology, we're helping the warfighter make better decisions in real time and stay one step ahead on the battlefield."

"The HANGTIME project is a breakthrough that unites high-altitude assets and situational unmanned systems into one coordinated sensor network—delivering a major advantage for the defense industry," said Dr. Denis Garagic, Chief Technology Officer, Palladyne AI. "For the first time, a single AI framework can coordinate assets across multiple domains, including satellites. That means these systems can now think and act together as a team, sharing what they see and learning as conditions change."

"The HANGTIME effort represents a critical step in multi-domain autonomy for coordinated execution in challenging environments," said Caleb Williams, Program Manager, AFRL/RIEA.

FUTURISTIC HELICOPTER DRONES PROGRAMME ADVANCES AS BRITISH BASED COMPANIES SELECTED TO DEVELOP PROTOTYPES

Seven industry partners have been invited to bring forward their designs for the futuristic drones, which will accompany British Army helicopters in future battles. Known as Project NYX, the programme is an innovative approach to work alongside industry to advance development of Uncrewed Air Systems (UAS) to operate alongside Apache attack helicopters.

When completed the drones will be able to function as 'loyal wingmen,' working alongside crewed Apache attack helicopters to perform a variety of complex tasks such as reconnaissance and surveillance in contested areas, strike and target acquisition and electronic warfare.

Through the Strategic Defence Review, the UK is pivoting to a new way of war, by harnessing new technology our Armed Forces will increasingly utilise uncrewed and autonomous capabilities to generate mass and lethality. Project NYX is delivery of that work in action, capitalising on the power of drones, AI and autonomy to complement the 'heavy metal' of tanks and artillery to make our Armed Forces stronger and safer on the battlefield.

The drones will operate on a 'command rather than control' principle, utilising AI for independent decision-making - being able to adjust to complex battlefield situations within the bounds of mission parameters. They will enhance lethality, survivability, and mission effectiveness while reducing the risk and logistical burden for human-operated systems.

Minister for Defence Readiness and Industry, Luke Pollard MP said: "These drones of the future will make the British Army more effective and lethal by enhancing our ability to strike, survive and win on the battlefield."

"Project NYX represents the cutting edge of the Defence Industrial Strategy, working with leading British industry partners to ensure the UK remains at the forefront of autonomous military technology."

The invitation to tender follows a rigorous pre-qualification phase that concluded late in 2025. Backing British companies and making defence an engine for growth, the seven shortlisted industry partners are as follows:

Anduril | BAE Systems | Leonardo | Lockheed Martin UK | Syos | Tekever | Thales

In March 2026 the shortlist will be further down selected to four suppliers, when they will be invited to and offered contracts to participate in research and development to produce a concept demonstrator, with initial operational capability targeted for 2030.

GA-ASI AND CALIDUS SIGN MOU TO COLLABORATE ON CO-PRODUCTION OF MQ-9B AND GAMBIT COLLABORATIVE COMBAT AIRCRAFT

General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI), the world leader in unmanned aircraft systems, and Calidus Aerospace, one of the leading defense and manufacturing companies, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to collaborate on the prospective co-production of MQ-9B Remotely Piloted Aircraft and Gambit Collaborative Combat Aircraft (CCA) in the UAE, as well as command and control and battle management systems.

The agreement was signed by GA-ASI President David R. Alexander and Dr. Khalifa Murad Alblooshi, Managing Director and CEO of Calidus Holding Group, on the sidelines of the UMEX and SimTEX 2026 taking place January 20-22, 2026.

The MOU provides a framework for cooperation between GA-ASI, GA-Intelligence, and Calidus where all parties will look to collaborate on programs in the areas of airframe manufacturing, final assembly, test and checkout, as well as flight operational test and acceptance.

"Working with partners within UAE helps us to connect with key experts and capabilities in the region," said GA-ASI President David R. Alexander. "For General Atomics, this agreement underscores the shared commitment to long-term cooperation, technological innovation, and the advancement of our aircraft within the UAE."

Commenting on this, Dr. Khalifa Murad Alblooshi, Managing Director and CEO of Calidus Holding Group, said: "The signing of this MOU with General Atomics, a global leader in unmanned aircraft, represents a strategic step towards strengthening and enabling the Group's capabilities in the unmanned systems sector in line with user requirements. This collaboration comes at a time of rapid growth in the sector both regionally and globally, drawing on the trusted expertise and manufacturing capabilities of both parties, opening the door to broader future partnerships in innovation, knowledge transfer, and expanded manufacturing, reinforcing our collective ambitions."

This collaboration will be historic as it represents the first time General Atomics' aircraft will be manufactured in the region, supporting the increasing demand for the MQ-9B Remotely Piloted Aircraft and the Gambit Collaborative Combat Aircraft in this region and the world.

MBDA ACHIEVES MAJOR MILESTONE WITH THE FIRST ONE WAY EFFECTOR CONTRACT

MBDA signed a historic contract for the development and production of the ONE WAY EFFECTOR – its sovereign long-range solution to saturate enemies' defences.

This strategic agreement highlights MBDA's ability to accelerate and innovate, strengthening our portfolio to remain fully aligned with operational realities and the evolving needs of the armed forces, while contributing to the reinforcement of national and European sovereignty.

A robust and cost-effective : solution to saturate enemies' defences Launched during the 2025 Paris Air Show in June, the ONE WAY EFFECTOR perfectly showcases how MBDA is adapting to increasingly complex and contested battlefield environments, by delivering compromise solution between the need for mass and performance at a lower cost. This robust and cost-effective solution ensures operational superiority to the armed forces in challenging contexts and high-intensity conflicts.

Developed with our partner Aviation Design and key industry partners, the ONE WAY EFFECTOR is set to revolutionise battlefield dynamics. This innovative production setup ensures a production at scale, aligning perfectly with the demands of modern warfare.

An unprecedented timeframe from the project announcement to the 1st contract signature It took less than a year between the project's announcement, the 1st test firing and the 1st contract signature. This unprecedented timeframe has been made possible notably by the DGA's innovative "Defence Drone Pact", based on a cooperative and agile approach with industrials.

The swift development of the OWE reflects MBDA's collective dedication and innovative spirit, highlighting our ability to rapidly address emerging military needs, especially in light of evolving conflict doctrines.

VANTAGE OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED: BUILDING EUROPE'S NEXT-GENERATION TACTICAL DRONE

The VANTAGE project has officially started, with the ambition to develop a modular, interoperable, and scalable European tactical drone platform tailored to modern battlefield and security needs.

Led by Latvijas Mobilais Telefons (LMT), the European Defence Fund project was officially launched in Riga with a kick-off meeting that gathered consortium partners to define the technical roadmap and establish operational priorities for the project's R&D activities.

VANTAGE is officially supported by four EU Member States, Latvia, Romania, Belgium and Estonia, underlining strong governmental backing and recognition of the project's potential positive impact on the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB).

"At UAV Navigation, we are proud to contribute our cutting-edge technology at the core of the VANTAGE project, a crucial effort to enhance European security and set new standards in unmanned aerial system capabilities," said Miguel Ángel de Frutos, Director & CTO at UAV Navigation – Grupo Oesía. "Our guidance and navigation solution is essential for enabling UAVs to perform coordinated, resilient autonomous operations on the battlefield of the future, delivering precision and reliability when it matters most, with proven operational capability and a commitment to European strategic autonomy."

A modular and interoperable: European drone platform VANTAGE focuses on a versatile Unmanned Aerial System

UAV Navigation

(UAS) integrating advanced C4ISR and kinetic capabilities, enabling the rapid integration of new sensors, effectors, and communications systems. Through its Interoperable Modular and Scalable Architecture (IMOSA), the platform is designed to remain adaptable to future technologies and evolving mission requirements.

Engineered for all European climates, the drone targets 10+ hours of endurance, a 200 km operational range, a 20 kg payload, and low-observable operations. This makes it suitable for a wide range of users, from EU Ministries of Defence and Special Operations Forces to armoured units, naval detachments, border authorities, and emergency services.

Operationally driven and aligned with Europe's strategic priorities and values VANTAGE directly draws on operational lessons from Ukraine, ensuring that real battlefield experience is embedded in the system's development from the outset. The project also contributes to the Latvia-led

Drone Coalition for Ukraine, supporting rapid testing, validation, and operational feedback for drone technologies. The Coalition has identified two key challenges: reconnaissance and precision strike against enemy targets in compliance with armed conflict laws and the EU ethics values, both of which are central to VANTAGE's design.

Strengthening Europe's strategic autonomy in UAS VANTAGE aims to deliver a credible European alternative to non-EU drone suppliers, strengthening interoperability, survivability, and autonomous cooperation between systems. It also contributes to the emergence of a future European standard for small tactical UAS.

A project selected by the European Defence Fund The VANTAGE project was selected by the European Commission under the European Defence Fund (EDF) in 2024. The project has been allocated a total budget of €10.091.395,31 million by the EU.

The EDF is the European Commission's instrument for supporting research and development actions in the defence sector. Its main objectives are to foster cooperation between companies, including SMEs, and Research and Technology Organisations (RTOs) throughout the Union, to promote the development of defence capabilities through investment, and to help EU companies develop advanced and interoperable defence technologies and equipment.

AEVA SELECTED BY FORTERRA TO POWER NEXT-GEN AUTONOMOUS DEFENSE VEHICLES WITH 4D LIDAR

Aeva® a leader in next-generation sensing and perception systems announced that it has been selected by Forterra, a pioneer in full-stack autonomous mission systems for defense and complex operational environments, to provide its 4D LiDAR sensors and perception technology for Forterra's autonomous vehicle system, AutoDrive.

Forterra's autonomous systems are transforming how ground vehicles operate in challenging and dynamic environments, from tactical logistics to forward reconnaissance. Aeva's 4D LiDAR technology will be integrated into the Forterra AutoDrive perception suite to enhance environmental awareness, obstacle detection, and navigation performance at extended distances — a critical capability for autonomous vehicles operating in unstructured, contested, and GPS-denied environments.

"Reliable, long-range and velocity aware

perception is key to safe and effective autonomous operations," said Josh Araujo, CEO of Forterra. "Aeva's LiDAR technology and perception enable our autonomy platform's ability to see and understand the environment when it matters to operator safety and mission performance."

Forterra is leveraging autonomy to extend the reach, speed and effectiveness of autonomous platforms in the battlefield by removing warfighters from hazardous missions. Autonomous systems powered by advanced perception technologies like Aeva's LiDAR are being employed across defense programs focused on combat support, convoy operations, and tactical resupply missions by keeping

soldiers out of harm's way while increasing mission lethality.

"This first win in defense validates the strength of Aeva's technology platform in delivering next-level perception for the most demanding autonomous mission systems," said Soroush Salehian, Co-Founder and CEO of Aeva. "Forterra's selection underscores the accelerating adoption of our technology across defense programs."

Aeva's advanced 4D LiDAR sensors deliver high-resolution, long-distance detection with simultaneous velocity measurement, providing robust situational awareness even in adverse weather, dust, and challenging terrain. These capabilities enhance Forterra's autonomy stack by enabling reliable detection of obstacles and terrain features at hundreds of meters — extending perception and decision-making horizons for autonomous ground vehicles.

SHIELD AI SELECTED TO PROVIDE V-BAT UAS AND HIVEMIND AUTONOMY SOFTWARE TO THE INDIAN ARMY

Shield AI, the deep-tech company building state-of-the-art autonomy software products and defence aircraft announced that India has selected Shield AI to supply V-BATs to the Indian Army. Under the program, the Indian Army will receive V-BATs and licenses for Shield AI's Hivemind autonomy software, which will be integrated into the V-BAT platform.

In addition to the procurement of V-BAT aircraft, the deal includes the licensing of Shield AI's Hivemind autonomy software development kit (SDK). Hivemind enables defense systems to sense, decide, and act, allowing autonomous platforms to adapt to dynamic environments, avoid threats, and complete missions without human intervention. The SDK enables the sovereign development, deployment, and evaluation of mission autonomy across platforms and will also be available to select Shield AI partners in India to develop autonomous solutions tailored for India, in India.

"Shield AI has been an early mover in investing deeply in India, forging strategic partnerships to bring sovereign defence capabilities to the nation in line with both governments' shared vision for a closely integrated U.S.-India defense supply chain," said Sarjan Shah, Shield AI's managing director for India. "India's selection of V-BAT and Hivemind for the Indian Army reflects a clear understanding of the resilient, expeditionary autonomy required by modern militaries operating across India's diverse environments. V-BAT's ability to operate without runways, deliver long-endurance intelligence at the tactical edge, and perform in contested environments makes it uniquely suited to provide intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) from the Himalayas to India's oceanic borders."

This deal builds on Shield AI's ongoing commitment to India's security and war fighting needs. In December 2025, JSW Defence Pvt. Ltd commenced construction of its facility for next-generation unmanned aerial systems (UAS) at EMC Maheshwaram, Hyderabad, as part of its strategic partnership with Shield AI to manufacture V-BAT domestically. This $90 million investment will enable large-scale production of V-BATs in India to serve the needs of the Indian Armed Forces and also function as a global production hub. V-BAT is a Group 3 vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) UAS with a ducted-fan design, more than 12 hours of endurance, and a heavy-fuel engine. Designed, tested, and deployed for the electronic warfare battlefield, V-BAT delivers ISR and targeting at significantly lower cost and logistical burden than larger Group 4 and 5 drones. Its single-engine, enclosed-rotor design enables safe, unassisted launch and recovery from ship decks, urban rooftops, and austere environments. Under this partnership, Shield AI's Hivemind autonomy software will also integrate onto V-BAT as an autonomous pilot, enabling AI-powered perception, cognition, and beyond-visual-range operations.

VEGVISIR SELECTED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND INTEGRATION OF AN IMMERSIVE INTERFACE IN COOPERATION WITH DOK-ING

Working with unmanned systems often comes down to one question: How do we help operators see more, stay safer, and make better decisions in environments where visibility and time are limited?

This has been one of our main focuses at Vegvisir. And now, we are taking an important step forward.

Beginning a New Cooperation with DOK-ING : Vegvisir has been selected as the best bidder in a public tender in Croatia for the development and integration of an immersive interface, with DOK-ING as the contracting party.

DOK-ING is a Croatian robotics and engineering company with over 30 years of experience in developing unmanned systems for complex environments that pose a high risk to human life.

The tender is part of the programme "Strengthening strategic partnerships for innovation in the process of industrial transition." Its aim is to advance unmanned ground systems with improved communication technologies, autonomy, and immersive interfaces that support real operational use.

What We Will Build : The subject of the procurement is the development of an immersive interface that enables operators to control unmanned ground vehicles through a virtual environment generated from the machine's real surroundings.

As part of this work, Vegvisir will integrate two of its core solutions into the system:

Vegvisir Remote, designed to support safe and intuitive remote operation of unmanned platforms.

Vegvisir Virtual Command Station, which enables operators to view, manage, and interact with mission data within one unified environment.

In practice, the full immersive interface will include:

real-time camera views stitched into one seamless 360° picture,

essential operational data presented in context,

a working environment that reduces overload from multiple screens,

and the ability for operators to remain at a safe distance while keeping full awareness.

It is a practical tool for people who need clarity in difficult terrain or rapidly changing conditions — something traditional camera setups cannot always provide.

Integration onto DOK-ING's next-gen dual use UGV's and Command Headquarters Vehicle

The system is planned to be integrated onto DOK-ING's dual-use unmanned ground vehicles. DOK-ING's next-gen UGVs perform where this technology matters most: hazardous, complex, and demanding missions in dull, dirty, and dangerous surroundings where visibility and safety are crucial to preserve human life.

There are also plans for integration into DOK-ING's Command Headquarters vehicle, expanding the use of the immersive interface beyond the platform itself and supporting broader command-level situational awareness. Further details on this integration will be confirmed together with DOK-ING.

PARAZERO SECURES 1ST ORDER FROM ISRAELI DEFENSE ENTITY FOR DEFENDAIR COUNTER-UAS SYSTEMS

ParaZero Technologies Ltd. an aerospace defense company pioneering smart, autonomous solutions for the global manned and unmanned aerial systems (UAS) industry, announced today it has received its first purchase order from a main Israeli defense entity for the Company's advanced DefendAir Counter-Unmanned Aerial Systems (CUAS).

This landmark order marks ParaZero's first direct contract with this leading defense entity for its DefendAir anti-drone technology. The systems will support the defense entity's extensive procurement initiatives amid heightened drone threats identified in recent conflicts, addressing the escalating drone threat as one of the primary risks to ground forces and critical operations.

DefendAir is a multi-layered, soft-kill CUAS solution featuring patented net-launching technology that enables safe, non-kinetic interception of hostile drones with minimal collateral damage. DefendAir has demonstrated 100% interception success in multiple field trials and is designed to protect troops, infrastructure, and urban environments from evolving unmanned aerial threats.

"We are honored to receive this first order from a leading Israeli defense entity, a testament to the reliability and effectiveness of our DefendAir systems in real-world defense scenarios," said Ariel Alon, CEO of ParaZero. "Following the lessons of recent conflicts, where drones have emerged as a significant battlefield challenge, this procurement underscores the urgent need for advanced, scalable counter-drone capabilities. We are proud to contribute to enhancing the protection of Israeli forces and look forward to supporting broader deployment of our technology."

The order includes delivery of DefendAir units along with integration and training support to ensure rapid operational readiness.

ACQUISITION OF MARSS COUNTER-DRONE C2 SYSTEM PROVIDER

Electro Optic Systems Holdings Limited announces that it has entered into an agreement to acquire the MARSS group business. MARSS is a Europe-based provider of command and control ("C2") systems, which are critical for effectively countering drones.

MARSS' proprietary C2 technology, NiDAR, provides advanced AI-enabled decision making and sensor-effector orchestration to rapidly counter asymmetric drone threats.

By combining its best-in-class effector and sensor capabilities with MARSS' C2 technology, EOS is transforming from a component supplier to an integrated counter-drone systems provider, with strong software and AI capabilities.

Highlights

Established in 2006, MARSS is a defence and security technology provider focused on developing and marketing sensor-fusion technology and AI-enabled C2 systems primarily for counter-drone use

The acquisition includes MARSS' NiDAR C2 technology, sensor-fusion and AI software platform and hardware offering, along with associated customer contracts, intellectual property and personnel

Creates an integrated, end-to-end solution for countering drones i.e. Detect ☐ Identify ☐ Decide ☐ Defeat - allowing EOS to act as a true counter-drone system provider and to compete for larger, higher-value programs as a Prime Contractor. This includes the delivery and operation of turn-key solutions for the protection of critical infrastructure in the military, homeland security and civil domain, such as airports or power plants
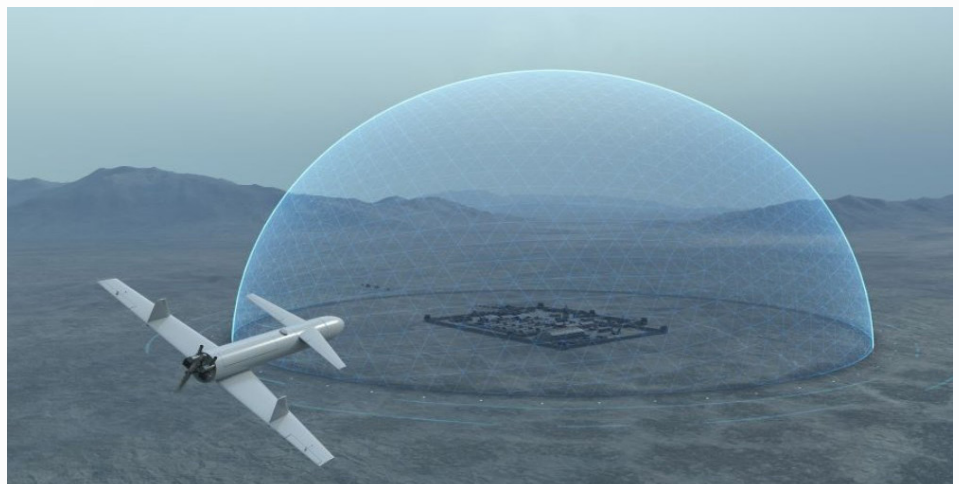
Expands EOS' geographic footprint and broadens its end market presence, with scope to leverage MARSS' defence, homeland security and civil relationships

Significantly strengthens EOS' in-house AI/software development capability

EOS plans to embed the AI-enabled NiDAR technology into its existing remote weapon system product range. It is envisaged that this will create the ability for the systems to form a mesh-network, providing the client's vehicle fleet hemispherical coverage against drone attacks – a new feature in today's market

Transaction structured as an asset acquisition, with consideration consisting of an upfront cash payment and an earnout, being additional contingent consideration tied to new MARSS sales:

Upfront cash payment of US$36m (~A$54m); plus

Potential earnout amount of up to €20m for each €100m (or part thereof) of certain new MARSS third party contract orders (up to €500m) secured prior to the end of the earnout period. The earnout payment is capped at €100m (~A$174m), subject to adjustments and is payable in a combination of cash (capped at €20m) and EOS shares. More details are below (in full ASX announcement). Acquisition cash consideration, primarily intended to be funded from existing cash reserves (~$107m at 31 Dec 2025), see further details below (in full ASX announcement).

Acquisition anticipated to be broadly neutral for earnings and operating cashflow in 2026.

Completion expected in 2026, subject to customer, regulator and other approvals

BABCOCK AND FRANKENBURG TECHNOLOGIES PARTNER ON MARITIME COUNTER-DRONE AIR DEFENCE SYSTEM

We have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Frankenburg Technologies to explore the development of a new and affordable air defence system in response to the increase of one-way attack drones.

As part of the MOU, we will develop a cost-effective, containerised platform for launching Frankenburg's new low-cost missiles, which it is manufacturing at pace, specifically to defend against one-way attack drones.

This joint capability will provide more affordable, scalable and kinetic solutions which are needed to be developed to protect military personnel and critical national infrastructure sites which could be exposed to attack across Europe.

With Frankenburg's engineering function led from the UK, the relationship will provide both organisations with the opportunity to develop a new sovereign capability, creating skilled employment in the UK and providing Babcock and Frankenburg with global export opportunities.

David Lockwood, CEO, Babcock, said: "Defence has entered a new era with the rapid development of drone warfare and industry needs to respond to this growing threat. We work with the brightest start-ups on defence's most critical challenges, and we're pleased to be working with Frankenburg Technologies on the development of an innovative maritime counter-drone air defence system."

Kusti Salm, CEO, Frankenberg Technologies, added: "Frankenburg Technologies' mission is clear: to bring affordability and scale to modern air defence. The drone threat has changed the character of warfare, and every layer of defence now needs to be designed for mass and speed from the outset. Partnering with Babcock, a recognised leader in maritime defence, allows us to combine rapid innovation with proven naval and industrial expertise, accelerating the delivery of an operational maritime capability."

EOS AIMS TO BE C-UAS WORLD LEADER

The scale of the threat extends well beyond the conventional battlespace and now includes civil infrastructure anywhere in the country. Just as Russia is targeting Ukrainian schools, hospitals and the power grid, so Kiev is hitting Russia's energy infrastructure – oil exports are funding the invasion - in addition to strictly military targets.

This has pushed both countries into evolving their air defence systems to be able to deal with these new threats. Ukraine has had notably more success in protecting themselves – though large gaps remain – and a role in that effort has been played by Canberra-based EOS through the supply of a number of Remote Weapon Stations (RWS) carrying sensors and autocannons.

EOS has also developed high-powered laser systems and has sold units to the Netherlands in August 2025 – a contract worth around $125 million - and more recently South Korea. As well as developing two very powerful effectors in the form of lasers and gun systems, the company has now moved into the provision of entire anti-drone solutions based on the acquisition of specialist C2 supplier MARSS.

MARSS started from humble beginnings in 2006, providing short range anti-drone systems for high-value commercial targets such as superyachts. This rapidly evolved into defending critical energy infrastructure such as Saudi Arabia's refineries that suffered a devastating Houthi drone and missile attack on 14 September 2019. These were so devastating that they cut the country's oil production by 50%.

At the heart of MARSS is proprietary software called NiDAR, which EOS CEO Dr Andreas Schwer explained to APDR contains an Artificial Intelligence (AI) core that allows it to evaluate threat detections from multiple sensors and assign appropriate countermeasures. This is done faster than a human operator could manage. AI is a critical ingredient for defeating large numbers of fast incoming targets approaching from multiple directions.

Previously, EOS has used proprietary software for some of its stand-alone anti-drone products such as Taranis – which combines radar, electrooptic and EW information with laser and cannon countermeasures – but these are for point defence applications. The beauty of NiDAR is that it is networked and scalable, meaning that the company is now able to provide broad area defence, so long as enough sensors and effectors are available.

It also means that while EOS is more than capable of providing an entire turnkey system, if a customer instead wants to use – for example – their own radar or weapon, these can be integrated without risk. According to Dr Schwer, this level of flexibility is sometimes offered by some of the world's largest defence equipment suppliers – but now EOS is in a position to provide a better performing system at a far lower price.

The Australian part of EOS will continue to focus on RWS deliveries, most significantly for a $108 million contract awarded in October 2024 by Hanwha Defence Australia. These will equip tracked Redback Infantry Fighting Vehicles (IFV) being built for the Army under LAND 400 Phase 3.

HENSOLDT AND TYTAN AGREE ON STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP IN COUNTER-UAS AND CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

HENSOLDT and TYTAN Technologies signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on January 26 to cooperate in the field of Counter-UAS systems and the protection of critical infrastructure. The agreement was signed by Balázs Nagy, CEO & Co-Founder of TYTAN Technologies, and Oliver Dörre, CEO of HENSOLDT, during the opening ceremony of TYTAN's new headquarters in Munich, in the presence of Dr. Markus Söder, MdL, Minister President of Bavaria.

Under the agreement, TYTAN's cost-effective interceptor drones and HENSOLDT's sensors and solutions expertise with its command-and-control software Elysion Mission Core will create an immediately deployable, Bavarian-made capability committed to safeguarding European skies.

The cooperation focuses on:

Integration of TYTAN platforms into HENSOLDT´s Counter-UAS solution Elysion Mission Core

Joint initiatives to protect critical infrastructure, particularly via existing initiatives with federal or state agencies

International joint projects especially in relation to supporting Ukrainian or NATO air defence

The cooperation demonstrates a shared commitment of both companies to deliver rapidly deployable, battlefield proven, and cutting-edge solutions to address one of today's biggest security challenges, the rapid development of mass drone warfare. The partnership strengthens European technological sovereignty and highlights Bavaria as the centre for defence innovation and industrial excellence whilst highlighting Bavarian leadership in Counter-UAS technologies.

"The cooperation of HENSOLDT and TYTAN allows us to combine agility, innovative strength, system integration expertise and domain knowledge at the highest level. In this way, we are contributing to significantly and rapidly enhancing protection against the increasing threats posed by drones." – Mr. Oliver Dörre, CEO of HENSOLDT

"TYTAN and HENSOLDT demonstrate unwavering commitment to protect people and critical infrastructure in Europe from unmanned threats – Not in 5 years but today. With technology that is battlefield-tested and based on the two companies´ proven excellence in their respective fields." – Mr. Balázs Nagy, CEO & Co-Founder TYTAN Technologies

RHEINMETALL DRONE LUNA NG DEMOS ITS CAPABILITIES IN THE BUNDESWEHR'S NEW RECONNAISSANCE AND OPERATIONAL NETWORK

Rheinmetall successfully participated in a visionary test conducted by the Bundeswehr at the Army Combat Training Centre in Saxony-Anhalt, using its LUNA NG unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) system. The test focused on the reconnaissance and operational network. From target detection to counter-measures, only unmanned systems were used, including drones and loitering munitions. Drone swarms are worldwide considered a novelty, and as yet an untested technology in terms of future combat methods of modern armed forces worldwide.

Within the Bundeswehr, the LUNA NG reconnaissance drone is known as the HUSAR (Highly Efficient Unmanned System for Medium-Range Reconnaissance) project. During the test period at the Combat Training Centre, Rheinmetall successfully integrated the system with the Bundeswehr's Command & Control Unmanned Management System (C2-UMS Bw). This allows LUNA NG to operate within reconnaissance and operational networks alongside other drones or loitering munitions. Notable features of the system include a flight time of over 12 hours

and a maximum altitude of 5,000 metres.

Overall, the test at the Combat Training Centre was characterised by a high level of digitalisation and networking. It showed that the interaction of reconnaissance and operational networks reduces the required time to detect, mark and counter-attack a target significantly.

During testing, LUNA NG reliably processed short-term assignments, showcasing its exceptional reconnaissance capabilities. The system also boasts great endurance and operates quietly at high altitudes.

The other participants connected to the C2-UMS Bw receive a status information of a large operational area, as well as high-resolution target information, via LUNA NG. Additionally, sensor information is available in real time, giving ground units a complete picture of the situation.

LASER-EQUIPPED C100 DRONES EXTEND TARGETING REACH, HELP TROOPS STRIKE CONFIDENTLY

Modern conflict has shifted toward dispersed, fast-moving units that operate far beyond the reach of traditional fire support. Their success depends on organic strike capability that lives inside the formation. PDW is delivering this capability to the front lines, giving warfighters the power to rapidly find, fix, and finish high-value targets with minimal signature and maximum lethality from stand-off ranges without relying on manned aviation assets.

In 2025, PDW set out to validate this capability through its Iron Lance campaign, partnering with the Department of War and UK allies to conduct a series of laser-designator and launched-effects demonstrations across the U.S. and the UK. A joint organic cross-domain fires effort, Iron Lance leveraged PDW's C100 sUAS integrated with purpose-built laser target designator payloads to enable land-air-sea precision strike.

The initiative brought together defense partners and end users to prove real-world performance, interoperability, and mission adaptability while laying the groundwork for expanded effects and mission sets in 2026.

"The ultimate platform for cross-domain fires, the C100 gives warfighters organic, on-demand precision strike from any domain, without waiting on manned aviation or external assets," said PDW CEO Ryan Gury. "It delivers the reach, survivability, and targeting authority that modern battlefields demand, empowering ground forces to identify, designate, and neutralize critical targets with unmatched speed and confidence."

Across four demonstrations, the C100 showcased operational endurance, precise lasing, and seamless integration with U.S. and allied fires platforms. Achieving 35+ minutes of LTD-equipped flight time in challenging winds, stable performance under operational stress, and user-driven iterative improvements, Iron Lance validated the C100 as a modular strike enabler, stand-off targeting asset, and organic fires platform.

"Iron Lance's successful demonstrations give U.S. military and joint forces a clear path to embrace these next-generation capabilities – expanding organic precision strike options, enabling truly distributed targeting, reducing risk for fires practitioners, and accelerating the convergence of ISR and fires across the force," continued Gury.

DRONESHIELD SELECTED FOR LAND 156 LOE 3 PANEL

DroneShield has been selected as a supplier for the Australian Department of Defence's (Defence) Project LAND 156's Line of Effort 3, which supports the Defence's strategy to address evolving threats posed by small drones in domestic security.

The selection relates to Line of Effort 3, establishing a Counter-small Unmanned Aerial Systems (C-sUAS) Services Standing Offer Panel (Panel). DroneShield's selection as a Category 2 CsUAS solutions provider on the Panel allows for Defence to procure hardware, software, Command-and-Control software (C2), and all associated support services under a Capability as a Service (CaaS) model. DroneShield is one of a number of parties selected as a provider on the Panel.

The Panel is available for Defence as a means of engaging domestic site planning and support services.

Selection on the Panel does not guarantee contracts. Under the Panel, each of Defence's base, or groups of bases, will be assessed and tendered by their appropriate authorities with specific requirements. This arrangement enables Defence to procure counter-drone solutions for Defence and other Whole of Government sites as a service after suitable assessment, streamlining contract opportunities and accelerating deployment timelines.

As noted by the Australian Minister for Defence Industry, the Hon Pat Conroy MP, the Australian Government has set aside $1.3 billion for the acquisition of counter-drone capabilities over the next 10 years, highlighting the strategic importance of this domain and of Project LAND 156.

Oleg Vornik, Chief Executive of DroneShield said, "We welcome the opportunity to support Defence through this Panel arrangement and stand ready to deliver battle-proven, software-defined C-sUAS solutions."

AIRCDRE (Ret'd) Terry Van Haren DSM, Vice President Strategy of DroneShield said, "The growing threat from small drones demands practical, tested solutions to safeguard Defence bases and critical assets. We encourage Government and Defence stakeholders to take advantage of this Panel arrangement to experience DroneShield's proven capabilities in domestic security."

HENSOLDT INTEGRATES KINETIC COUNTERMEASURES INTO THE BUNDESWEHR'S COUNTER-UAS ASUL

The Federal Office of Bundeswehr Equipment, Information Technology and In-Service Support (BAAINBw) has commissioned HENSOLDT to integrate kinetic countermeasures into the ASUL drone defence system, which has been proven in service for many years. This is another pioneering step towards the sustainable combat enhancement of ASUL, following the update of the sensor technology at the beginning of 2025, which included the latest generation of the HENSOLDT SPEXER radar.

ASUL is part of a holistic air defence system: the modular counter-small unmanned aircraft system (C-sUAS) with a scalable and scenario-specific sensor-effector mix is designed for the reliable detection, classification, identification and successful combating of small UAS in real time. To this end, complementary active and passive radar systems, electro-optical sensors and a diverse range of countermeasures, both from HENSOLDT

and from proven technology partners, are integrated into a complete system. The C2 software Elysion Mission Core uses powerful, AI-supported algorithms to merge all sensor and effector data, including data from other networked air defence and C-UAS systems, and offers suitable options for action as robust decision support for the operational forces.

ASUL effectors were previously limited to so-called soft-kill capabilities – this spectrum is now significantly expanded by the ability to deploy kinetic

countermeasures. To this end, HENSOLDT is integrating the KONGSBERG weapon station into a 10-foot container and adapting it for use with the weapons already in service with the German Armed Forces. A new command container enables close cooperation between the commander, the Elysion operator and the weapon station operators. In future, each ASUL system can be equipped with several of these effectors, depending on the threat situation, in order to effectively secure large areas against UAS, even if they are protected against soft-kill effectors.

ASUL has proven itself comprehensively in various scenarios since 2022, providing valuable operational experience. Building on this experience and current technological developments, HENSOLDT is continuously expanding the modular ASUL system to realise the capability enhancements required by soldiers at short notice.

MISTRAL AND UVISION ANNOUNCE HERO 90 SELECTION FOR U.S. ARMY'S LASSO PROGRAM

Mistral Inc. and Uvision Inc. announced that the HERO 90 loitering munition has been selected by Program Executive Office (PEO) Soldier to participate in the U.S. Army's Low Altitude Stalking and Strike Ordnance (LASSO) program, an urgent initiative to deliver a man-portable, precision anti-armor capability to Brigade Combat Teams.

LASSO is a U.S. Army initiative to provide dismounted units with a man-portable, precision loitering munition capability for rapid, lethal engagement of armored threats. The HERO 90, developed by Uvision, delivers extended-range, counter-armor precision from a highly portable form factor, supporting rapid launch by a single operator in under two minutes. Configurable warheads (including anti-armor), mission-abort/re-engage options, and secure BLOS communications provide decisive effects with top attack capabilities.

"Selection of HERO 90 reflects the Army's focus on portability, lethality, and MOSA-ready integration. Together with Uvision, Mistral will support PdM Soldier Precision Targeting Devices with a solution that aligns to Common Control

and integrates seamlessly across the BCT kill chain." Yoav Banai, Senior Vice President, Mistral Inc.

"The Army's LASSO program is accelerating a transformational anti-armor capability for dismounted units. HERO 90 was designed

precisely for this mission, fast to deploy, lethal at range, and adaptable through open architectures. We're proud to collaborate with Mistral to deliver this overmatch to U.S. Soldiers." - Jarmin Blanton Vice President of Business Development, Sales & Marking.

EPIRUS' LEONIDAS DEMOS SUCCESSFUL USE OF HIGH-POWER MICROWAVE TO DEFEAT FIBER-OPTIC CONTROLLED UAS

E pirus released video footage of the company's Leonidas VehicleKit (VK) high-power microwave (HPM) platform successfully disabling a fiber-optic guided unmanned aerial system (UAS) during a December 2025 live-fire technology demonstration at a U.S. government testing site. The event marks the first known instance of electromagnetic interference being weaponized to defeat a fiber-optic guided drone.

Fiber-optic first person view (FPV) drones have emerged as a game-changing tactic in contested environments, particularly in Ukraine, where they are employed daily for one-way attacks and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions. Unlike conventional UAS that rely on radio frequency (RF) links for pilot control, fiber-optic guided FPV drones connect to their pilots via spools of long, thin, fiber-optic cable. These fiber-optic guided FPV drones operate without an RF command-and-control link, rendering them immune to jamming, spoofing and other legacy EW counter-UAS measures.

The Leonidas HPM platform defeats fiber-optic guided drones by delivering precise, software-defined weaponized electromagnetic interference to induce full kill within critical onboard electronics rather than relying on kinetic destruction or RF disruption. The Leonidas HPM platform utilizes non-ionizing radiation, making it inherently safe for humans when used as intended and its software-defined, highly directional phased array antennas focus energy on identified target areas only. Its near-instantaneous effects enable operators to influence the target's drop zone to minimize collateral damage.

Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister and Digital Transformation Minister Mykhailo Fedorov has publicly stated that Russian forces are now fielding fiber-optic FPV drones with 31 miles of range and that these drones represent "a very considerable threat to logistics and personnel." An August 2025 U.S. Army analysis of fiber-optic FPV drones similarly concluded that these drones "pos[e] a significant counter-UAS challenge" and are "extremely difficult to detect and target."

"The proliferation of fiber-optic guided UAS represents a major shift in drone warfare and exposes a growing operational gap for counter-UAS defenses — one that Leonidas is designed to address and close," said Andy Lowery, Epirus CEO. "Leonidas' ability to defeat this new class of threat represents an important breakthrough in safe, non-kinetic defense against emerging drone tactics and reinforces Epirus' leadership in scalable, one-to-many counter-UAS platform development."

SUCCESSFUL JAGM QUAD LAUNCHER DEMO SHOWCASES 90-DEGREE VERTICAL LAUNCH AND C-UAS CAPABILITIES

F or the first time, Lockheed Martin conducted a successful 90-degree launch of a Joint-Air-to-Ground Missile (JAGM) from the JAGM Quad Launcher (JQL) during a demonstration in China Lake, California.

THE BIG PICTURE
In the demonstration, JAGM proved its ability to neutralize UAS threat systems.

It also demonstrated the versatility of the JQL launcher, which was mounted to a Richard Childress Racing 6x6 Mothership vehicle.

WHY IT MATTERS
Validating JAGM & JQL full vertical-launch capability: This demonstration validated JAGM's full vertical-launch capability across multiple platforms, including surface-combatant vessels, which provides a 360-degree defensive envelope for maritime vessels and other platforms. With JAGM's advanced dual-mode seeker (SAL/MMW), this integration effort presents JAGM as the ideal munition solution for the U.S. Navy and its allies' mission-critical needs.

Showcasing counter-UAS technology: The successful engagement of a UAS threat with JAGM underscores the missile's ability to detect, track and neutralize hostile threats including drones, unmanned surface vehicles (USVs) and other air threats. This is an increasingly vital capability that modern naval forces need to address emerging threats.

Multidomain mission integration: The integration of JAGM with the JQL highlights Lockheed Martin's ability to provide flexible, mission-tailored deployment across air, sea and land environments. Operators can select from a range of engagement envelopes to meet specific user mission objectives.

EXPERT PERSPECTIVES
"The successful JQL vertical-launch demonstration confirms that JAGM can be rapidly deployed from a multimissile launcher across a variety of scenarios, while delivering the network-centric integration our global users demand," said Casey Walsh, program management director, Lockheed Martin Multi-Domain Missile Systems. "This milestone validates our vision of a unified missile architecture that seamlessly operates across air, land and sea domains, enhancing survivability and flexibility for future combat operations."

"Lockheed Martin continues to push the boundaries of what is possible in vertical launch system development, driving innovation and advancement in the field," said Edward Dobeck, director, Lockheed Martin Launching Systems. "This proven combat-ready capability meets multidomain deployment objectives today, and provides the same reliability expected of all

Drones World Editor Kartikeya In Conversation with

Dr. Lorenz Meier

CEO of Auterion

Q The demonstration proved a 1:3 operator-to-target ratio. What is the practical upper limit for this ratio in a contested environment, and what factors (bandwidth, AI decision-making) become the primary constraints?

A The Florida test validated a 1:3 operator-to-target ratio in a live-fire setting with autonomous navigation, deconfliction, and terminal guidance handled by the Nemyx swarm engine and Skynode avionics. Practically, Auterion sees the ratio scaling significantly higher as all processing is onboard.

Q By enabling small units to target heavy armor, this technology blurs traditional echelons of warfare. How do you envision it reshaping small-unit tactics, procurement priorities, and even the creation of a new "swarm commander" role within squads?

A Giving a small unit the ability to coordinate simultaneous EFP strikes against multiple armored targets effectively moves brigade-level effects down to the squad and platoon, changing how light forces plan assaults, delay operations, and area denial without organic artillery or air support. Auterion expects this to influence procurement toward software-defined, attritable systems and swarm-ready mission kits, and to formalize a new swarm role in small units.

Q This test proves a lethal offensive swarm capability. How is your system architecture being hardened against the electronic warfare, GPS denial, and adversarial AI that will define the counter-swarm battle?

A Nemyx is designed as a resilient swarm engine that uses distributed autonomy, drone-to-drone communication, and local

decision-making so that the group can continue to operate even when GPS or parts of the link are degraded. Auterion's architecture emphasizes modular, open standards so that anti-jam navigation aids and defensive AI models can be integrated as they emerge, enabling continuous adaptation against electronic warfare, GPS denial, and adversarial autonomy in a future counter-swarm fight. The use of live-fire munitions in a demonstration shows the level of trust the Department of War has in the capabilities.

Q In the kill chain, the operator "assigns objectives and authorizes lethal effects." Precisely where is the line drawn between human command and software autonomy? What ethical and Rules of Engagement (ROE) frameworks are you developing with the DoD to govern this?

A In Auterion's concept of operations, the operator assigns objectives, selects targets, and authorizes lethal effects, while the software autonomously executes the "how" of navigation, deconfliction, and synchronized impact within those human-defined constraints. The clear design intent is that autonomy accelerates the kill chain but does not replace human command authority.

Q Your platform aims to unify "heterogeneous airframes." For this strike, were the drones identical or different? What are the key software/hardware standards required to
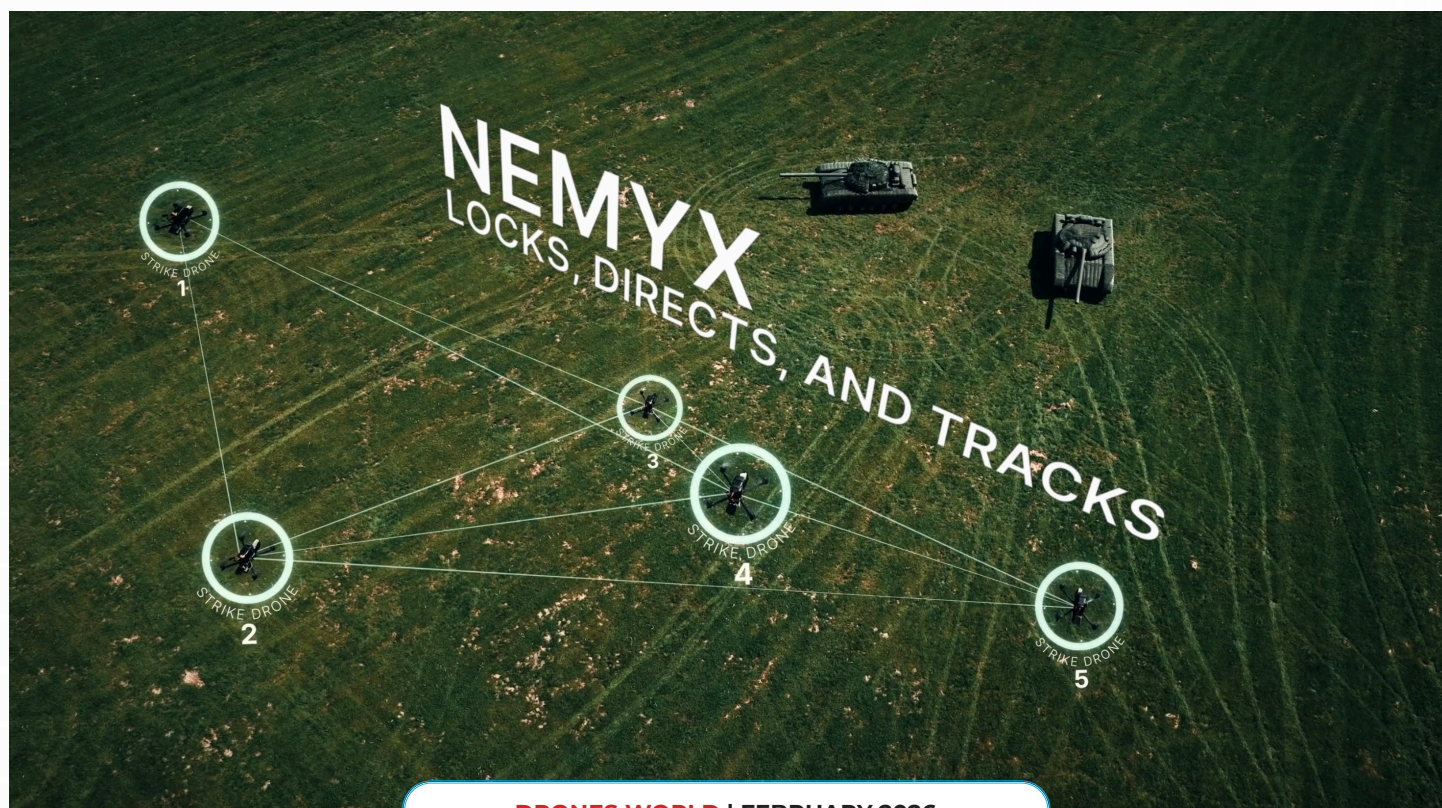
integrate a third-party munitions carrier or sensor into the swarm?

A The Florida test builds on Auterion's earlier multi-manufacturer swarm demonstration in Munich in December, where heterogeneous airframes were unified under a single operating system and coordinated by Nemyx; the same stack is intended to control both identical and mixed fleets depending on mission design. The key to integrating third-party munition carriers and sensors is AuterionOS with Skynode-class avionics, which expose common interfaces for navigation, payload control, and data, allowing partners to plug into a standard autonomy, communications, and mission-management layer rather than bespoke point-to-point integrations.

Q With over 30,000 kits reportedly in Ukraine, what are the most critical real-world lessons that have been fed back into the development of this swarm strike capability, particularly for the AI's tactical models?

A The operational experience gained in Ukraine has directly informed Nemyx's design focus on contested-spectrum operations, rapid field integration, and robustness with low-cost airframes and munitions. The AI and swarm logic are being shaped by real-world patterns such as how operators manage latency, how often links are disrupted, and how enemy forces adapt to loitering munitions, leading to tactical models that prioritize fast, parallel engagements, redundancy in routes, and graceful degradation when parts of the swarm are lost.

Q As the "swarm prime," how do you define your core proprietary value—is it the hardware, the AI engine, the integration standard, or all three? How does this role differ from a traditional defense prime contractor?

A We define our core proprietary value as the combination of our autonomy engine (Nemyx), our open operating system and integration standards (AuterionOS and Skynode), and the reference hardware that makes those capabilities deployable at scale on attritable platforms. Unlike a traditional prime centered on vertically integrated platforms, Auterion's role is to be the software-first swarm prime that unifies many manufacturers and effectors into one coordinated system, letting customers mix and match airframes, warheads, and sensors without locking into a single hardware vendor.

Q This test is a preview of the DoD's Swarm Forge program. What are the key technical and bureaucratic milestones to transition this from a demonstration to a formally acquired and fielded program of record?

A The Florida event serves as an early preview of the DoD's Swarm Forge effort, demonstrating that live-fire, one-to-many lethal swarm tactics are now operational rather than theoretical. Moving from demonstration to a program of record will hinge on repeating these results with increasing scale, codifying interfaces and data standards, integrating with battlefield tools, and navigating the requirements and testing processes across the services to formalize doctrine, safety, and ROE around swarm employment.

Q The collaboration with Kraken Kinetics suggests a "plug-and-play" munitions ecosystem. Is your long-term strategy to become the integrating "operating system" for various effectors, and what is the business model for partners in this ecosystem?

A The collaboration with Kraken Kinetics illustrates Auterion's intent to support a plug-and-play ecosystem where different effectors, including EFP warheads and future payloads, are delivered through a common autonomy and control layer. Strategically, Auterion aims to be the operating system of this ecosystem, providing the swarm software, avionics, and standards, while enabling partners to compete and innovate on airframes and munitions, with business models ranging from licensed integrations of AuterionOS and Nemyx to reference designs that accelerate partner time-to-field.

MISSION SPECIALIST WRAITH SIGNALS AV'S NEXT STEP IN COMPACT UNMANNED UNDERWATER SYSTEMS CAPABILITY

AeroVironment Inc. a leading provider of all domain autonomous systems announced the launch of the Mission Specialist Wraith, the newest addition to the Mission Specialist Unmanned Underwater Vehicle (UUV) series developed by its wholly owned subsidiary, VideoRay. Designed for demanding subsea operations, Wraith delivers a new level of agility, power, and control in a compact, expeditionary-ready platform.

Engineered for extreme agility and precision in challenging subsea environments, Wraith delivers true six-degree-of-freedom maneuverability through 10 vectored thrusters, allowing it to hold any attitude—vertical, inverted, or fully rolled— while maintaining stability, power, and control in strong currents and at depth. The platform supports a wide range of payloads, including advanced imaging, navigation, and manipulation tools, making it well suited for subsea inspection, defense, and scientific missions.

"Modern operations increasingly depend on access, awareness, and freedom of maneuver below the surface," said Chris Gibson, Chief Executive Officer at VideoRay. "Wraith gives forces a compact, rapidly deployable system that delivers the precision and control once reserved for much larger vehicles, helping operators extend reach, reduce risk to personnel, and respond faster in complex maritime environments. It expands what compact UUVs can achieve while improving overall mission efficiency."

Built on VideoRay's proven open-architecture Mission Specialist design philosophy, Wraith enables rapid reconfiguration, seamless third-party integration, and simplified field serviceability. With up to 80 pounds of forward thrust and simultaneous lift, the platform enables rapid direct-to-target transit and precise station-keeping, even in high-current environments.

The newly released Mission Specialist Wraith Expeditionary configuration marks the first step in a planned spiral development for the product. Future iterations will expand depth capability, payload capacity, endurance, and system flexibility, ensuring the Wraith platform continues to evolve alongside customer requirements and emerging technologies.

TEXTRON SYSTEMS INTRODUCES MULTI MISSION UNCREWED SURFACE VESSEL (MMUSV)

Textron Systems Corporation, a Textron Inc. company, announced the introduction of its Multi Mission Uncrewed Surface Vessel (MMUSV), the 5th generation of its CUSV® craft. Building on the CUSV, common unmanned surface vessel's, proven maturity, the MMUSV offers longer range and higher endurance, expanding the U.S. Navy's capacity for advanced mission capabilities including surface warfare, mine countermeasures (MCM), intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) and signals intelligence (SIGINT). Textron Systems was awarded the Low-Cost Unmanned Maritime Solution (Large) award through the Expeditionary Mission Consortium-Crane (EMC2) in August 2025 for the development, testing and delivery of the craft.

Designed to meet the needs of the U.S. Navy and its allies, the MMUSV offers two times the fuel and payload capacity (up to 13,000 pounds) of earlier craft, survivability up to Sea State 5 and towing capacity of 4,000+ pounds, while being a low-cost, rapid production solution that builds on Textron Systems' 40+ years of multi-domain autonomous vehicle experience.

"As an industry leader in USVs, Textron Systems has spent the last three decades at the forefront of

autonomous system innovation," said David Phillips, Senior Vice President Air, Land and Sea Systems. "Our expertise in design, integration and fielding have consistently delivered unrivaled maritime strength to the Navy and its allies. The scalability of our systems ensures that the MMUSV, the next advancement in our lineup, provides enhanced mission capabilities rapidly and efficiently."

Textron Systems is the originator of the CUSV, the Mine Countermeasure (MCM) USV for the U.S. Navy Unmanned Influence Sweep System (UISS) program of record. The business continues to support the Navy's Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) Mine Countermeasures Mission Package efforts through multi-year support contracts including fleet support and sustainment, engineering services and depot maintenance, a multi-year production contract for delivery of Mine Sweep Payload Delivery Systems (PDS), and a multi-year development and integration contract for a next generation Minesweeping payload called Magnetic and Acoustic Generation Next Unmanned Superconducting Sweep (MAGNUSS).

US NAVY AND MARINES SELECT L3HARRIS T7 ROBOTS TO ENHANCE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL CAPABILITIES

L3Harris Technologies has received an award to support the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Marines with 34 large T7™ robots that will deliver enhanced capabilities for explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) missions.

L3Harris T7 robots help keep troops out of harm's way by neutralizing explosive threats from a safe distance. The company designed the robotic systems for high-risk missions, providing mobility, manipulation and intuitive control.

"Recognized by both the Navy and Marines for outstanding dexterity and performance, L3Harris T7 robotic systems will provide them a significant advantage for their most challenging EOD missions," said Dave Kornick, President, Intelligence and Cyber, Space and Mission Systems, L3Harris. "We're honored to continue working with the Department of War and our key partners in the U.K. and Australia, who also use the most advanced robotic technology available."

Deliveries under this multi-year contract are scheduled to begin this year. L3Harris will also provide robotic system and comprehensive operator training.

This award follows a U.S. Air Force order for more than 100 robots in 2021. The Australian Defence Force and U.K. Ministry of Defence also use large T7 and medium-sized T4 robots to support their EOD missions.

KNDS FRANCE SHOWCASES ITS OPERATIONAL SUPERIORITY SOLUTIONS TAILOR MADE FOR THE QATARI FORCES AT DIMDEX 2026

KNDS France is promoting the VBCI MK2, the only native Infantry Fighting Vehicle incorporating operational lessons learned from French forces during their deployments (Mali, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Eastern Europe). VBCI is adapted to the most demanding operational conditions, including desert terrains on which it has demonstrated the full extent of its mobility, and the range of its tactical and strategic deployability. VBCI benefits from unique protection solutions and unprecedented levels of reliability and availability, being combat proven in the highest conditions of operations.

The VBCI MK2 benefits from firepower adapted to the logistics of the Qatari armed forces and capable of engaging a wide range of targets. VBCI is designed to integrate different turret systems as required by the customer, including 30mm cannons. KNDS Ammo also offers the full range of 30x173 mm munitions, including its armor-piercing fin-stabilized kinetic penetrator round, delivering a level of lethality superior to the rest of the market. KNDS France has built upon the trust of the Qatari forces for the production of 30 mm munitions since the beginning of their cooperation on Mirage 2000 aircraft more than 40 years ago.

RAPIDFire Land, the combat-proven solution for the future of counter-drone warfare In light of the extensive use of drones and loitering munitions in high-intensity conflicts, as well as in cross-border strikes, KNDS France is showcasing RAPIDFire Land, the first remotely operated 40 mm turret equipped with artificial intelligence-based algorithms. Equipped with the same cannon as the EBRC Jaguar, RAPIDFire Land fires the full range of 40 mm telescoped ammunition, including the anti-aerial airburst (A3B) round, a munition dedicated to air defense. Leveraging the proven Airburst technology of the GPR-AB-T munition, the A3B round delivers a payload of tungsten sub-projectiles with a directional (frontal) terminal effect, offering increased effectiveness against a wide spectrum of aerial threats.

These 40 mm telescoped munitions therefore provide a triple advantage:

An effective range equivalent to more than twice that of standard 30x173 munitions;

A 50% reduction in length compared to conventional 40 mm munitions;

A greater on-system ammunition load and fewer rounds required per mission

As such, RAPIDFire Land benefits from all the qualities of the close-in defense system already selected by the French Navy, as well as increased mobility, both in its 8x8 chassis-mounted version and its 20-foot deployable pallet version. The system offers a load of 140 ready-to-fire rounds, enabling swarm interceptions without the need for reloading. RAPIDFire Land thus provides a protective bubble for high-value units up to a range of 4 km.

Autonomy Without Anarchy

Why the Next Decade of Warfare Will Be Won by Standards, Not Algorithms Alone

By Cdr Rahul Verma (Retd.)

Modern warfare has entered an uncomfortable paradox. Never before have militaries possessed such advanced autonomous and AI-enabled systems and never before has the risk of operational incoherence been so high.

Across conflicts, exercises, and peacetime inductions, autonomy is accelerating faster than the frameworks meant to govern it. Drones are cheaper, sensors are smarter, and decision aids are quicker. Yet speed without structure does not automatically translate into advantage. In fact, recent wars suggest the opposite. As Armed Forces worldwide move deeper into the autonomous age, one lesson is becoming inescapable, the decisive edge will belong not to those who field the most autonomous systems, but to those who integrate autonomy within a common, disciplined standard.

> "Autonomy does not fail because machines are weak, it fails when militaries forget that coordination, not computation, wins wars."

What the Battlefield Is Really Teaching Us

The Russia–Ukraine war has become the most revealing case study of modern conflict in decades. Much has been written about drones, loitering munitions, and AI-assisted targeting, but the deeper lesson lies

unmanned systems. Yet effectiveness depended less on quantity and more on how quickly sensor data was fused, decisions were authorised, and effects were delivered. Where systems were interoperable and command authority was clear, the OODA loop collapsed decisively in favour of the user.

Where autonomy operated in isolation, it became vulnerable jammed, spoofed, or rendered tactically irrelevant. The battlefield did not reward autonomy in isolation. It rewarded autonomy embedded in a system-of-systems logic.

From European Battlefields to Asian Realities
These lessons are not geographically bound. During recent Indian operations, including Op Sindoor, similar patterns emerged in a different operational and political context.

Autonomous and unmanned systems proved indispensable for ISR, situational awareness, and force protection. Where sensor-to-shooter chains were clearly defined, commanders gained time, often the most precious commodity in modern operations. Where integration lagged, decision cycles stretched, despite the presence of advanced technology. The implication is stark. The technology maturity alone does not guarantee operational effectiveness. The missing link is almost always structural, how autonomy is authorised, coordinated, and trusted across formations and services.

The Acquisition Surge and the Coming Inflection Point
Across the world, armed forces are in the midst of an unprecedented acquisition surge. Recent conflicts have stripped away peacetime assumptions and exposed uncomfortable capability gaps particularly in unmanned systems, long-endurance ISR, loitering munitions, counterUAS, electronic warfare, and AI-enabled command tools. India, like many others, has responded with speed and intent.

This phase of rapid procurement is both logical and unavoidable. Operational lessons demand immediate correction, and delay carries risk. However, history shows that the true challenge of military modernisation rarely lies in acquisition it lies in absorption.

The inflection point inevitably arrives when quantity and variety begin to overwhelm coherence. Multiple platforms from different vendors, operating on different data architectures, autonomy logics, and command philosophies,

start competing for the Commander's attention rather than serving it. What initially appears as capability growth can quietly turn into cognitive overload. At this stage, militaries must shift focus from buying more to making sense of what has already been bought. This is the consolidation phase, and it is strategically decisive.

Consolidation is not about slowing momentum but it is about transforming inventory into a warfighting system. It demands deliberate effort in integration, common operating concepts, shared autonomy standards, and joint validation. Armed forces that fail to recognise this transition risk creating forces that are technologically impressive but operationally disjointed fast at the platform level, slow at the formation level.

The wars of the next decade will not be won by those who buy the most systems, but by those who orchestrate them best.

Why Standards Matter More Than Software
In discussions on autonomy, software often dominates the narrative, better algorithms, faster processors, smarter AI. Yet software alone does not create military advantage. Standards do.

A Standard for Autonomy provides the invisible architecture that allows disparate systems to behave as a single force. It defines how autonomy is expressed, constrained, supervised, and trusted, irrespective of vendor or platform. Without such standards, autonomy scales chaotically. Each system optimises for its own internal logic, leading to unpredictable behaviour when deployed together. In high-tempo operations, this unpredictability translates into hesitation, duplicated effort, or worse unintended escala-

tion. A robust autonomy standard must therefore go beyond technical specifications. It must codify the undermentioned:-

➢ Graduated autonomy levels, linked explicitly to mission types and risk thresholds
➢ Human–machine command relationships, clearly defining when humans intervene and when machines act
➢ Behaviour under degradation, ensuring predictable responses when communications, navigation, or sensors are compromised
➢ Validation regimes, where autonomy is tested against adversarial scenarios rather than ideal conditions

Such standards do not constrain innovation, they just liberate it. Industry can innovate rapidly when the rules of interaction are clear. Militaries can induct faster when certification pathways are predictable. Commanders can trust systems when behaviour is consistent. In this sense, standards are not bureaucratic artefacts they are operational force multipliers.

> "In future warfare, the side that shortens the OODA loop through integration will defeat the side that merely automates it."

Interoperability: The Silent Enabler of Victory
Interoperability rarely attracts headlines, yet it remains one of the most decisive factors in modern warfare. In a battlespace defined by joint, multi-domain operations, no autonomous system fights alone. An unmanned platform operating effectively within a single service but failing to integrate at the joint level becomes a liability rather than an asset. Data silos, incompatible autonomy states, and mismatched command interfaces slow decision-making precisely when speed is essential.

True interoperability requires more than shared communications protocols. It requires shared understanding of autonomy modes, decision authorities, confidence levels, and system intent. A maritime commander must intuitively understand what an autonomous air or land system is doing, why it is doing it, and what it will do next. This is where common standards become indispensable. They allow autonomy to be expressed in a language that is universally understood across services and domains. They enable commanders to think in effects rather than platforms.

Most critically, interoperability is what allows autonomy to compress the OODA loop rather than fracture it. When sensors, shooters, and decision aids operate within a common framework, orientation and decision phases collapse dramatically. When they do not, commanders spend precious time reconciling systems instead of commanding forces. Interoperability is not a technical aspiration it is a prerequisite for victory in high-speed warfare.

The Real Objective: Compressing the OODA Loop

The ultimate promise of autonomy is not the removal of humans from warfare, but the compression of time. When autonomy is standardised and integrated:-

➢ Sensors cue effects faster
➢ Information arrives fused, not fragmented
➢ Commanders decide with greater confidence
➢ Actions across domains are synchronised

When autonomy is fragmented, the opposite occurs. Humans spend time reconciling systems rather than commanding forces. The OODA loop expands instead of collapsing. In such cases, autonomy paradoxically slows the very force it was meant to accelerate

Ethics, Accountability, and Strategic Credibility

Autonomy introduces not just operational complexity, but strategic and moral weight. For responsible military powers, the question is not whether autonomous systems will be used, but how legitimacy and accountability are preserved when they are. Clear autonomy standards are essential to this balance. They ensure that decision authority remains traceable, that rules of engagement are enforced consistently, and that responsibility for lethal outcomes is never ambiguous. This is particularly important in grey-zone operations, where escalation control and narrative credibility are as important as tactical success.

From a global perspective, militaries that can demonstrate disciplined, transparent control over autonomous systems enjoy greater strategic legitimacy. Allies trust them more

readily. Adversaries calculate their actions more cautiously. Civilian oversight remains meaningful rather than symbolic. In contrast, poorly governed autonomy invites suspicion, instability, and miscalculation. Systems that act opaquely, without clear human supervision undermine not only ethics, but deterrence itself.

For democracies, standards are therefore not a constraint they are a strategic shield.

Conclusion: Order Before Speed

As another year turns, it is customary to wish peace, progress, and preparedness. For the first time in military history, however, that wish must extend beyond people and platforms to machines that now think, decide, and act alongside us. The coming years will mark a kind of new year for drones and autonomous systems. They will no longer be experimental, exceptional, or peripheral. They will be routine participants in surveillance, targeting, logistics, and combat. They will be present not just at the tactical edge, but deep inside command-and-control architectures. They will increasingly shape how wars begin, how they are fought, and how they are prevented.

But wishing autonomy a future is not enough. It must be deliberately, seamlessly, and responsibly integrated.

Integration not innovation alone, will decide whether autonomy shortens the OODA loop or fractures it. Standards not software alone

that will determine whether machines amplify command intent or complicate it. And leadership not algorithms, will ultimately decide how much authority is delegated, when it is reclaimed, and who remains accountable when things go wrong.

> "The real test of autonomy is not whether machines can act independently but whether militaries can integrate them without losing control."

As armed forces worldwide enter this decisive phase, the challenge is no longer technological. It is institutional. It is doctrinal. It is human.

If we get this right, autonomous systems will become trusted teammates accelerating decisionmaking, enhancing deterrence, and preserving lives. If we get it wrong, they risk becoming fast, opaque actors in an already compressed battlespace. So, as we step into this new year and this new era, perhaps the most honest wish we can offer is this:

May our drones fly smarter, but under command. May our algorithms think faster, but within boundaries. And may autonomy advance, but never at the cost of coherence, accountability, or control. Because in the wars to come, machines may move first, but responsibility will always move last, and it will rest with us.

Cdr Rahul Verma (r), former Cdr (TDAC) at the Indian Navy, boasts 21 years as a Naval Aviator with diverse aircraft experience. Seaking Pilot, RPAS Flying Instructor, and more, his core competencies span Product and Innovation Management, Aerospace Law, UAS, and Flight Safety. The author is an Emerging Technology and Prioritization Scout for a leading Indian Multi-National Corporation, focusing on advancing force modernization through innovative technological applications and operational concepts. Holding an MBA and Professional certificates from institutions like Olin Business School, NALSAR, Axelos and IIFT, he's passionate about contributing to aviation, unmanned technology, and policy discussions. Through writing for various platforms, he aims to leverage his domain knowledge to propel unmanned and autonomous systems and create value for Aatmannirbhar Bharat and the Indian Aviation industry.

INTRACOM DEFENSE LAUNCHES NATO AIS FUNDED PROJECT ON USV STANDARDIZATION

NTRACOM DEFENSE (IDE) has been recently awarded by the NATO Accelerating Interoperability and Standardization (AIS) Fund, a new project entitled "Unmanned Surface Vehicles (USV) Standardization: Current Status and Future Outlook". The project's goal is to accelerate USV standardization by identifying standardization gaps and providing guidelines and recommendations to NATO for steering related standardization activities. Within the project, relevant NATO and non-NATO standards and certification frameworks will be analyzed and recommendations for collaboration with external Standards Developing Organizations (SDOs) and the industry will be provided.

IDE is the Implementing Agent (primary contractor), partnering with DEFENCE

STANDARDIZATION ADVICE P.C. (DEFSTAND), a Greek SME with unique expertise on interoperability and standardization management, and ASTM International, a global leader in the development and delivery of voluntary consensus standards, for the successful implementation of the project.

In this context, IDE and DEFSTAND representatives participated in the NATO Joint Capability Group on Maritime Unmanned Systems (JCGMUS) meeting, held at the end of 2025, in Madrid, Spain, where they presented the project's implementation plan and received valuable feedback from the meeting participants.

SHOM STRENGTHENS ITS HYDROGRAPHIC CAPABILITIES WITH EXAIL'S DRIX H-9 UNCREWED SURFACE VESSEL

The french hydrographic and oceanographic service (Shom) has selected Exail's DriX H-9 Uncrewed Surface Vehicle (USV) to further expand its hydrographic and oceanographic capabilities. The acquisition supports Shom's objective to deliver certified, high-quality maritime data more rapidly, responding to increasing civil and military needs across expanding areas of interest.

Following the recent delivery and operational deployment of the DriX H-8, ordered in December 2024, Shom has confirmed the value of uncrewed surface systems for hydrographic surveys. Building on this experience, the new DriX H-9 will enhance survey operations offering increased endurance, greater autonomy and increased operational flexibility. With an autonomy up to 20 days (depending on the payload), the DriX H-9 can be deployed either directly from shore or from Shom's hydrographic and oceanographic vessel Beautemps-Beaupré, enabling flexible integration into existing survey operations.

By leveraging uncrewed technologies, Shom can accelerate data acquisition cycles, extend survey coverage, and ensure the timely availability of reliable information essential for a wide range of applications, including safety of navigation, environmental monitoring, coastal management, and

maritime planning.

This new order reflects the confidence Shom places in Exail's uncrewed surface systems and in the operational maturity of the DriX platform. By supporting Shom in the dronization of its hydrographic fleet, we are contributing to more efficient collection of maritime data, helping decision-makers address increasingly complex civil and military challenges. As the third DriX H-9 ordered in just a few months by different customers, this latest acquisition confirms that the platform's extended endurance and autonomy effectively address a wide range of operational needs." Pierre-Louis Roudaut France Sales Manager at Exail

"The DriX-H9 will offer strong

complementarity with Shom's other data acquisition assets, in particular with Marlin, our DriX H-8, with which it can be operated jointly. Its capabilities will allow deployment directly from the Brest naval base, from where it will be able to autonomously reach survey areas in the English Channel or the Atlantic Ocean. This new DriX will also benefit from the experience gained by our teams through Marlin, as well as from shared infrastructures." Denis Creach, Shom's Transformation hydro-oceanographic capabilities officer

With the integration of the DriX H-9 into Shom's fleet, Exail and Shom continue a close collaboration aimed at supporting the evolution of France's hydrographic capabilities.

Drones World Editor Kartikeya In Conversation with

Semion Dukhan

Head of Europe for SK Group

Q There has been a lot of discussion around the cutting-edge ARBEL system from IWI. Can you tell us about the system and how it works?

A The ARBEL is a combat-proven, cutting-edge computerized fire control system designed to improve hit probability and lethality on standard AR-15 platforms dramatically. When the shooter pulls the trigger, the first round is discharged mechanically, as in any standard rifle. While the trigger remains pulled, the system begins continuously analyzing the shooter's micro-movements and autonomously times the release of subsequent rounds, firing only when it calculates that the probability of a hit is at its peak. This eliminates the need for complex trigger work, one of the most challenging aspects of marksmanship in dynamic scenarios, allowing the shooter to focus entirely on target tracking and aiming. In drone interception scenarios, where targets are small, fast-moving, and maneuver unpredictably at a distance, ARBEL offloads the timing of follow-up shots to the system, making accurate and repeatable engagements possible even in high-pressure environments. The system can intercept drones at ranges of up to 450 meters during daylight conditions and 250 meters at night, providing soldiers with effective standoff capabilities across a wide range of operational settings.

Q How does the ARBEL differ from other solutions on the market?

A Unlike other counter-drone solutions that require specialized platforms or sensors, ARBEL integrates directly into existing AR-15 rifles without the need for external equipment or retraining. Its plug-and-play design enables any soldier to use familiar weapons while gaining immediate performance benefits. Optics-agnostic and compatible with a wide range of sighting systems, from red dots and LPVOs to thermal and night vision devices, ARBEL adapts to the shooter's preferred setup. In an era where small drones pose an increasing threat on the battlefield, ARBEL offers a cost-effective, scalable, and efficient solution that elevates every shooter's ability to intercept airborne targets with confidence and precision.

Q What do you attribute the increased interest in the ARBEL to?

A The growing interest in the ARBEL reflects the rapidly expanding role of drones on the modern battlefield and the very real threat they pose to individual soldiers. Small, inexpensive and widely available drones are now routinely adapted to carry grenades, small payloads or other weapons, and are deliberately used to hunt and target troops at the tactical level. This has fundamentally

changed the threat environment: drones are no longer rare or strategic assets, but persistent, close-range dangers soldiers face every day. Just as no modern army would send a soldier into combat without a helmet or protective vest, it is no longer acceptable to deploy them without effective means to protect against hostile drones actively sent to attack them.

Q **ARBEL has been described as a kinetic "hard-kill" system. In a market with many laser, RF-jamming, and net-based solutions, what specific threat or operational gap does this kinetic approach uniquely address?**

A The ARBEL's kinetic hard-kill approach is specifically designed to address the persistent operation gap posed by tactical, low-cost drones, which have historically been difficult to counter effectively. While the market offers numerous solutions for larger, higher-end UAVs – such as lasers, RF jamming, and net-based systems – those approaches are often expensive, platform-bound, and ill-suited to the economics and agility of small tactical drones. These drones are cheap, expendable, increasingly autonomous, and often deployed at close range, making it impractical to rely on high-cost interceptors or bulky systems that lack mobility. By embedding the ARBEL computer into a soldier's rifle or LMG, the system enables an immediate, organic and deterministic kinetic response at the tactical edge, allowing the individual soldier to engage the drone that is directly threatening them. This creates a cost-effective, highly mobile and assured countermeasure where soft-kill effects may be unreliable or unavailable and when larger systems cannot react with the necessary speed or proximity.

Q **How does the ARBEL perform against the newest generation of autonomous or GPS-denied tactical drones that are designed to resist RF jamming?**

A The ARBEL is inherently immune to RF, GPS and autonomy countermeasures because it does not rely on disrupting the drone's electronics. Its kinetic approach physically intercepts the threat, regardless of how the drone is guided or whether it is fully autonomous. This makes it particularly effective against pre-programmed or GPS-denied tactical drones. The result is a deterministic neutralization rather than a probabilistic soft-kill effect.

Q **What is the effective engagement range and reaction time for the ARBEL when mounted on a standard infantry rifle or LMG, and how much training does it require for a soldier to use it effectively?**

A The concept of the ARBEL system integration matches the effective distance of the standard AR15 platform. Therefore, small, tactical drones can be intercepted up to 450m during the day and 250m at night. The first bullet has zero latency, as it's purely mechanical. While keeping the trigger pulled, the system is set into operation within milliseconds. Then the system analyzes the optimal timing for releasing the consecutive rounds. Since the ARBEL is integrated into the standard, already existing AR15 platform, the training is also close to zero.

Q **How does the ARBEL's cost-per-engagement compare to other counter-UAS solutions, particularly when facing large numbers of low-cost tactical drones?**

A The ARBEL is embedded into the existing AR15 rifle, using the same setup, and the same standard ammunition. It's the cost for a standard round of bullets, which is around US$1. The ARBEL allows forces to scale their defense without scaling their cost.

Q **In a layered air defense concept, where does the ARBEL fit relative to soft-kill systems and larger, vehicle or site-based hard-kill solutions?**

A The ARBEL is designed to operate at the tactical edge as the final, close-in layer of defense. It complements soft-kill and larger hard-kill systems by filling the gap when those systems are unavailable, ineffective or too slow to respond. By placing a counter-drone capability directly in the hands of dismounted soldiers, ARBEL ensures protection at the point of contact. This creates a more resilient, layered defense.

Q **What operational feedback influenced the ARBEL's development, especially regarding mobility, reliability and performance in real combat environments?**

A A key piece of feedback was that this counter-drone capability needed to be embedded directly into the soldier's weapon to be truly effective. By integrating the ARBEL into the soldier's rifle or LMG, the system leverages existing training, muscle memory and engagement workflows, significantly reducing the need for additional instruction or specialized operators. The result is a highly reliable solution that performs under combat stress without adding cognitive or logistical burden.

Q **How does the ARBEL address emerging tactics such as drone swarms or coordinated multi-axis attacks at the small-unit level?**

A The ARBEL provides individual soldiers with organic counter-drone capability, enabling multiple shooters within a unit to engage threats simultaneously from different angles. This distributed approach is particularly effective against swarms or multi-axis tactics, where centralized systems can become saturated.

HANWHA AND HAVOCAI FORMALIZE PARTNERSHIP TO DEVELOP 200-FOOT AUTONOMOUS SURFACE VESSEL

Hanwha Defense USA (HDUSA), Hanwha Systems Co (HSC), and U.S.-based collaborative autonomy company HavocAI announced they will jointly develop 200-foot autonomous surface vessels (ASV). This agreement pairs the leading global shipbuilding company with the most advanced collaborative autonomy technology on the market.

Hanwha is currently the only shipbuilder with an operational shipyard in the United States to enter into a joint agreement with an autonomous vessels company. Hanwha Philly Shipyard is under consideration to produce the 200-foot autonomous ASV.

HavocAI recently closed a $85m funding round, publicly confirmed the sale of dozens of vessels to the U.S. Department of War, and successfully demonstrated their collaborative autonomy technology in GPS-denied environments to Ukrainian officials.

"By forging a partnership between an allied defense company with advanced manufacturing scale in Hanwha with a software-first defense technology company in HavocAI, we will deliver state-of-the art ASVs at scale for American service members," said Hanwha Defense USA CEO Michael Coulter. "This agreement will not only deliver for the American warfighter but will create much-needed competition for the Department of War acquisition process."

"The Department of War has sent a clear demand signal to the shipbuilding industry: we need more boats, faster, with more capabilities, for less money," said Paul Lwin, Co-founder and CEO of HavocAI. "Partnerships like this – pairing a leading-edge technology with an established global infrastructure – are exactly how we achieve that goal."

Under the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the companies will jointly develop these ASVs to include mass production planning, installation, proposal development, and technical domains.

Production will be pursuant to the U.S. Government's Modular Attack Surface Craft solicitation program.

Last October, Hanwha and Havoc AI announced a strategic relationship following a joint technology demonstration from Hanwha Ocean's Geoje shipyard in Korea where Havoc AI conducted an autonomous force protection mission off the coast of Hawaii, with beyond-line-of-sight command and control from Geoje.

HII SUCCESSFULLY DEMOS SEA LAUNCHER, SHIP-BASED AUTOMATED LAUNCH AND RECOVERY OF REMUS UUV

HII the world's leading manufacturer of autonomous underwater unmanned vehicles, announced the successful shipboard deployment and recovery of a REMUS autonomous underwater vehicle (UUV) using the company's automated launch and recovery system, Sea Launcher.

The demonstration represents a key milestone in advancing operationally proven manned-unmanned teaming for maritime missions and highlights HII's ability to integrate mature automation and autonomy into ship-ready systems, including the HII ROMULUS family of unmanned surface vessels (USVs) currently in production.

During recent testing, HII validated key aspects of system performance to support a fully autonomous, end-to-end launch and recovery sequence. The test used a representative vehicle configured for real-world mission conditions and mirrored a recovery procedure that has been proven in deployments repeatedly across U.S. Navy and allied operations.

Automated launch and recovery significantly reduces risk to sailors, expands mission range and flexibility, and shortens mission timelines. These advantages are particularly important in contested or high-sea-state environments, where minimizing hands-on deck operations improves safety and operational availability.

"This is proven technology applied in a highly relevant shipboard configuration," said Duane Fotheringham, president of Mission Technologies' Unmanned Systems business group. "REMUS has successfully performed autonomous line capture and recovery for years. What this demonstration shows is how seamlessly that capability integrates with automated launch and recovery systems onboard manned or unmanned vessels to support modern maritime operations."

REMUS is one of the most widely deployed autonomous underwater vehicle families in the world, trusted by more than 30 navies for missions including mine countermeasures, undersea survey, intelligence collection, and environmental sensing. Its modular design and open architecture allow it to operate independently or as part of a distributed maritime force, teaming with crewed ships, unmanned surface vessels, and other undersea platforms.

"This demonstration reinforces the value of REMUS within a distributed maritime operating model," Fotheringham added. "Whether operating alongside manned platforms or coordinating with other unmanned systems, REMUS provides commanders with a reliable and flexible capability they already know and trust."

Looking ahead, HII plans to continue integrating REMUS with its new ROMULUS unmanned surface vessel (USV) family, as well as a range of manned and unmanned ships, to support evolving customer requirements across U.S. and allied navies.

FRANCE ORDERS AIRBUS VSR700 UNCREWED AERIAL SYSTEM

The French Armament General Directorate (DGA) has awarded a contract to Airbus Helicopters and Naval Group for the production of six VSR700 uncrewed aerial systems. The VSR700s will be operated from 2028 by the French Navy.

"We are honored that the French Ministry for the Armed Forces has decided to launch the next phase of the VSR700 programme with serial production for France and future export customers within the frame of the agreement signed at the Paris Air Show in 2025. Airbus Helicopters is fully committed to delivering this much-needed operational capability. Our teams are focused on providing the French Navy with a reliable, high-performance tool that enhances their sovereignty and mission success," said Bruno Even, CEO of Airbus Helicopters. "To ensure the success of this next chapter, we have established a new industrial setup specifically designed for serial production. This structure allows us to adapt to the specificities of the UAS market and to scale efficiently while maintaining

the highest standards of aeronautical safety and performance," he added

The VSR700 will be delivered in an Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) configuration comprising a surveillance radar, an electro optical system and an AIS (Automatic Identification System) receiver. Naval Group will ensure its integration into the overall architecture of the ships and its interconnection with the combat system thanks to the Steeris® Mission System.

The VSR700 is a dual use uncrewed aerial system, based on the crewed Cabri G2 from Hélicoptères Guimbal. The naval military version was developed and tested in the frame of the French Navy and DGA SDAM (Système de drone aérien de la Marine) programme, in cooperation with Naval Group. The VSR700 and its mission system have been extensively tested over land and at sea. Often deployed in complement of a crewed helicopter, the VSR700 can be used to extend a vessel's intelligence gathering capabilities and conduct long endurance surveillance missions.

The VSR700 can accommodate a variety of long-range, high-performance sensors. Although it will be used in an ISR configuration by the French Navy, the VSR700 is a multirole UAS that can be used for a variety of missions including logistics and armed scout both in a maritime and a land environment. It can also be used for civil missions including firefighting and disaster relief. Airbus has also demonstrated the VSR700's ability to team with crewed helicopters using the HTeaming solution.

GERMANY BUYS 8 MQ-9B SEAGUARDIAN RPA THROUGH NSPA

Germany's Federal Office of Bundeswehr Equipment, Information Technology and In-Service Support and the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA) have announced the procurement of eight MQ-9B SeaGuardian® Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) from General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI). The program includes four Certifiable Ground Control Stations. First delivery is expected in 2028.

Germany joins a growing list of NATO countries that have selected GA-ASI's advanced MQ-9B RPA for its multi-domain capabilities with exceptionally long range and endurance. The platform provides pole-to-pole satellite control and de-icing capabilities to enable missions in cold climates. SeaGuardian features two multi-mode surface-search radars that deliver wide-area maritime surveillance, with an option to add Anti-Submarine Warfare capability. Additionally, MQ-9B's in-house-developed Detect and Avoid System aids its ability to fly in unsegregated airspace for domestic civilian operations, making it highly versatile for operations from Germany.

In 2025, MQ-9B became the first large RPA to obtain a Military Type Certificate from the UK's Military Aviation Authority, certifying its safe operation without geographic restrictions, including over populous areas.

"We're thrilled that Germany has joined the list of NATO countries that have selected MQ-9B SeaGuardian," said GA-ASI CEO Linden Blue. "The

proliferation of MQ-9B in Europe delivers commonality between NATO countries and for Germany, it will provide opportunities for interoperability with their fleet of P-8As."

The acquisition negotiation was executed on behalf of Germany by NSPA, which has developed a contractual framework through the MQ-9 Support Partnership (MIC SP) for supporting cooperation amongst its member nations and enabling the procurement of MQ-9B for NATO Allies and Partners. NSPA has added MQ-9B to its portfolio of defense systems to contract on behalf of NATO nations, with the goal of enhancing interoperability for joint training and operations.

"This Support Partnership demonstrates how NSPA enables efficient, effective and responsive multinational acquisitions for advanced, interoperable capabilities. We are proud to support Germany in this strategic investment for maritime surveillance and security," said Ms. Stacy A. Cummings, NSPA General Manager.

MQ-9B includes the SkyGuardian® and SeaGuardian® models as well as the Protector RG Mk1 that is currently being delivered to the United Kingdom's Royal Air Force (RAF). GA-ASI also has MQ-9B procurement contracts with Belgium, Canada, Denmark, India, Japan, Poland, Taiwan and the U.S. Air Force in support of the Special Operations Command and is looking forward to welcoming Germany to that group. MQ-9B has also been featured in various U.S. Navy exercises, including Northern Edge, Integrated Battle Problem, RIMPAC, and Group Sail.

Drones World Editor Kartikeya In Conversation with

Mr.Clem Newton-Brown

CEO- Skyportz

Q Skyportz was founded on the idea that vertiport infrastructure—not aircraft—would be the biggest bottleneck for advanced air mobility. What gaps did you see early on that convinced you this was the problem to solve?

A We have been in the industry for 8 years and Skyportz was one of the first vertiport companies in the world. It struck me back then that if this air taxi revolution was to take place it was largely dependent on a fine grain of vertiport landing sites. My view has not changed – without the ecosystem of landing sites the industry will never deliver what it has promised, no matter how good the aircraft.

Q The Aeroberm vertipad concept focuses heavily on downwash and outwash mitigation. In practical terms, how does this design improve safety and enable vertiports to operate in dense urban environments?

A The biggest impediment to new urban landing sites is safety from powerful blasts of downwash and outwash. This can be resolved either by providing large buffers of land around a vertiport or using our patented product that shrinks the footprint safely and enables new locations to be established on tighter sites. Less land means less cost which will flow through to ticket prices for passengers.

Q Skyportz has moved from simulations to physical prototyping. What key performance benchmarks must the Aeroberm prototype meet before you consider it commercially deployable?

A If the cost of our pad is less than the cost of the extra land you would otherwise need for safety, then there will be a ready market for our product.

The prime destinations for vertiports are also the places where land is most expensive.

Q Vertiport standards are still evolving globally. How are you engaging with regulators to ensure Skyportz designs align with future certification requirements rather than just current helipad rules?

A We are engaging with air safety regulators from around the world to ensure that our Aeroberm™ product is universally accepted for air taxi landings. We will be placing prototypes with partners in all emerging regions in the coming year as part of our R and D programme.

When we are ready to offer the pad commercially we expect that it will be a known and trusted product.

Q Rather than owning all infrastructure, Skyportz is pursuing a licensing and network model. Why is this approach better suited for scaling vertiports globally?

A If the air taxi revolution comes it will be global and it will rapidly scale. Our modelling shows that in India alone there will be demand for up to 15 000 vertiports in the next 20 years. We cannot possibly operate every vertiport on our anticipated sales volume.

We aim to simply sell a product under licence that supports the operators of the air taxi ecosystems

Q Partnerships appear central to your strategy. How do collaborations with aircraft OEMs, universities, property developers, and urban planners differ across regions such as Australia, North America, Europe, and Asia?

A Our model is largely the same in all regions – bring together all players in the ecosystem initially in R and D sandbox environments and then offer local partners licences to sell our product to their local market once we have an acceptable ecosystem template.

Q Can you explore more details about recent mou during wings India 2026?

A We have entered into an MOU with Gomsons Aviation which will be supporting our introduction of the Aeroberm™ to the DCGA, the local Governments, aircraft OEMs and the property industry.

Over time we expect that they will help us to retail the product in the Indian market.

Q In emerging AAM markets like India and Southeast Asia, urban density and land constraints are extreme. How does your vertipad strategy adapt to these regional realities compared to Western markets?

A In most Western markets where urban congestion is not significant we expect the demand for our Aeroberm will be low. It is where urban density, congestion and land constraints come together that the value of our product becomes most apparent. This is why we believe India will be such a big market....

The long average commute distances and low peak-hour travel speeds, which make the time savings of eVTOL travel more appealing

The high reliance on road-based transport,

which means alternatives are less readily available and air taxi services can displace higher commuter volumes.

The growing wealth of Indian residents and higher proportion of residents who could afford air taxi services over time

The relatively low costs operating costs of air taxi services, with both lower capital requirements to establish networks and lower ongoing costs compared to other major cities

Q You've spoken about vertipads serving more than passenger air taxis. What role do you see for cargo drones, emergency medical services, and disaster response within the Skyportz network?

A We believe that heavy lifting drone freight will be an early and profitable use case when the industry commences. Aeroberm pads at industrial sites will become commonplace to move goods, business to business.

Emergency response is also a good initial use case as the community support for saving lives will be higher than for commercial uses.

Q As Skyportz expands into multiple regions, interoperability becomes critical. How do you ensure your vertipad designs remain aircraft-agnostic while supporting different eVTOL configurations and operational concepts?

A We are designing our Aeroberm to be capable of taking the weight and size of the largest air taxis in development.

While we aim to release an aircraft agnostic product, we are also open to tailoring our design for OEMs that want to develop a proprietary vertiport ecosystem.

Q Funding and commercial timelines remain a challenge across the AAM sector. What are the key milestones investors and partners should watch for over the next 24–36 months?

A Thankfully we are through the most expensive part of our journey and we have a $500 000 R and D fund (with support from the Australian Government) to bring our product to market after fine tuning.

Creating commercially certified aircraft is a hugely expensive undertaking and many (if not most) OEMs will fail due to lack of funds to make it through. There are over 1000 aircraft in development, at various stages.

The well-funded frontrunners such as Joby and Archer will help to pave the path for those following. There are some very promising Indian air taxi OEMs such as Sarla, Nalwa and ePlane in development and they will benefit from the efforts of the first movers.

Safety is paramount and the industry will collapse if air safety regulators prematurely approve new aircraft that are not airworthy.

There is a long way to go in this industry but I expect that it will settle into a handful of players that offer the best of the different types of aircraft suitable for various operations

Q Looking ahead to 2040, if Skyportz succeeds globally, how do you believe vertiport infrastructure will reshape urban mobility—and what does success look like for Skyportz across multiple continents?

A Our aim is for the Aeroberm™ to be the globally accepted starting point for every landing site globally and that there will be a dense pattern of vertipads built in major cities around the world.

But this is just one small piece of the puzzle and there will only be success for all the players if we work together on a safe and effective ecosystem to transform the way we move people and goods.

EVE AIR MOBILITY SECURES $150M FINANCING TO ACCELERATE EVTOL DEVELOPMENT

Eve Air Mobility a global leader in the development of next-generation electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) solutions, has secured $150 million in debt financing from a syndicate of leading financial institutions. The 5-year loan included Itau, Banco do Brasil, Citibank, and Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group, underscoring strong market confidence in Eve's vision and long-term strategy.

"This successful debt raise represents a significant milestone for Eve and a strong endorsement of our leadership in shaping the future of urban air mobility," said Eduardo Couto, chief financial officer at Eve Air Mobility. "The confidence of large banks reinforces our commitment to delivering a fully integrated eVTOL ecosystem. This financing provides long-term resources necessary to accelerate development, advance certification, and execute our strategic roadmap through 2028 and beyond."

The proceeds will support Eve's research and development, including the integration of its eVTOL aircraft into a comprehensive urban air mobility ecosystem. This funding accelerates technological progress and strengthens partnerships with infrastructure providers and regulatory bodies. With these resources, the Company can advance aircraft certification and commercialization while ensuring compliance with global aviation standards. This transaction enhances Eve's capacity to meet rising global demand for sustainable, low-emission transportation and enables scalable operations in key urban markets.

With this transaction, Eve's total funding now reaches $1.2 billion, reaffirming its status as one of the best-capitalized companies in the emerging eVTOL market.

The Company recently completed the first flight of its full-scale engineering prototype at Embraer's test facility in Brazil, marking a critical step toward commercialization. This successful hover validates key systems, including fly-by-wire controls and energy management, and initiates a robust test campaign planned for 2026.

Eve Air Mobility continues to strengthen its position as a leader in the United States' Urban Air Mobility ecosystem. With a growing network of suppliers, customers, and strategic partners, Eve is not only delivering innovative solutions but also shaping the future of urban air mobility. As one of the leading OEMs in the sector, Eve's collaborative approach ensures that its technology and services are deeply embedded in the U.S. market, creating a strong foundation for sustainable growth and operational readiness across the entire Urban Air Mobility value chain.

JOBY PREPARES FOR 1ST WAVE OF AIR TAXI PILOT TRAINING WITH CAE FLIGHT SIMULATORS

Joby Aviation, a developer of electric air taxis for commercial passenger service, has accepted the first of two advanced flight simulators developed in partnership with CAE, a global leader in pilot training and simulation. The simulators are designed to meet the highest levels of Federal Aviation Administration qualification and will play a central role in supporting commercial single-pilot eVTOL operations in the United States.

The simulators provide an ultra-realistic training environment and are equipped with the same high-fidelity simulation technologies used to train pilots at the world's leading airlines. They form a critical part of Joby's FAA certification and operational readiness pathway, supporting pilot training ahead of the company's planned first commercial flights.

"These simulators are central to the FAA certification process and are being delivered on time to support pilot training ahead of Joby's first commercial flights planned for this year," said Bonny Simi, President of Operations at Joby. She noted that developing FAA-qualified flight simulators is a multi-year process requiring extensive aircraft data and regulatory engagement, and is a prerequisite for Part 135 operations of eVTOL aircraft. Joby began working with CAE in 2022 to build a scalable, qualified pilot training infrastructure aligned with its commercial launch timeline.

The first simulator—part of CAE's 3000 Series fixed-base training devices—will begin installation this month at Joby's expanded manufacturing and pilot training facility in Marina, California. The second unit, a full-motion simulator, is expected to arrive later this year. Together, the two simulators will support training for up to 250 pilots annually. The fixed-base simulator is expected to be qualified by the FAA as a Level 7 Flight Training Device, while the second unit will be certified as a Level C Full Flight Simulator, capable of simulating the aircraft across all axes of motion.

Both simulators feature a 300-by-130-degree field of view, delivering a fully immersive experience powered by CAE's Prodigy Image Generator, which leverages Epic Games' Unreal Engine to produce highly detailed 3D urban environments. AI-driven modeling creates lifelike cityscapes, while integrated audio cues, turbulence, and vibration systems replicate real-world flight conditions, including complex wind flows around ground structures.

"These high-fidelity simulators are designed to be a digital twin of our aircraft," Simi added, "providing both a means of regulatory compliance and a powerful tool to prepare pilots for the demands of high-volume urban air mobility operations."

Over several years, Joby and CAE have rigorously developed and tested simulator hardware and software across multiple facilities in California and Costa Rica, ensuring full alignment with FAA flight simulator qualification standards and paving the way for scalable eVTOL pilot training.

ARCHER TO BUILD NEXT WAVE OF AVIATION AI TECHNOLOGY WITH

Archer Aviation Inc. announced plans to develop and deploy the next generation of artificial intelligence technologies for aviation using the NVIDIA IGX Thor platform.

The aviation space is a high-impact domain for Physical AI, particularly to advance critical capabilities in aircraft safety, airspace integration and autonomy-ready systems. Archer plans to debut its NVIDIA integration at its recently acquired Hawthorne airport in central Los Angeles, which is expected to be its operational hub for its planned LA air taxi network and a test bed for its AI-powered aviation technologies.

The companies have been working together since early 2025, with Archer planning to integrate NVIDIA IGX Thor, the company's most powerful safety-capable AI computing module, into future iterations of its aircraft programs. NVIDIA IGX Thor is built to enable high-reliability, real-time onboard computing for safety-critical environments, supporting advanced perception, decision making and predictive operations.

Archer aims to power the next wave of AI technology in aviation, with a focus on three core areas:

Enhancing Pilot Safety & Predictive Awareness:

Leveraging NVIDIA's high-throughput edge computing to sense the environment, while processing flight-path data in real-time, giving pilots earlier, clearer and more actionable insight.

Seamless Airspace Integration: Developing AI systems that help bring current airspace management systems into the 21st century, allowing aircraft to safely integrate into today's complex airspace, including improved routing logic and dynamic traffic-aware flight planning.

Autonomy-Ready Flight Controls: Pairing NVIDIA IGX Thor with Archer's proprietary avionics and control software to build a next-gen computing architecture capable of supporting future autonomous and semi-autonomous operations.

"CES has always been a launchpad for technologies that reshape industries, so we're proud to announce our AI collaboration with NVIDIA here," said Adam Goldstein, Archer's Founder and CEO. "NVIDIA's AI compute capabilities and software stack give us the foundation to accelerate toward safer, smarter aircraft systems and modernize how aviation interfaces with the world's airspace."

Initial integration of NVIDIA IGX Thor into Archer's development pipeline is already well underway, with broader applications expected across manufacturing, aircraft fleet operations and pilot training. The collaboration builds on Archer's expanding ecosystem of AI-focused partnerships.

VERTICAL AEROSPACE BRINGS VALO TO NEW YORK, OUTLINING PLANS FOR ELECTRIC AIR TAXI ROUTES

Vertical Aerospace launches its U.S. tour in New York City this week, bringing its new commercial electric aircraft, Valo, to the U.S. for the first time alongside plans for electric air travel routes in New York with Bristow Group (NYSE: VTOL) and Skyports Infrastructure.

The U.S. tour builds on Valo's unveiling in London in December 2025 and marks the next step in Vertical's global engagement with customers, investors, regulators, and partners ahead of entry into service following regulatory approval currently expected in 2028.

Introducing Valo to the U.S. : Vertical Aerospace's Valo is positioning itself as a premium yet scalable solution for urban air mobility, combining passenger comfort, operational flexibility, and airline-driven design. The aircraft's initial configuration features a four-seat premium cabin with panoramic windows, generous personal space, and class-leading luggage capacity. Based on extensive input from airlines and operators, the modular cabin design allows expansion to six seats, enabling improved operator economics and the potential for lower passenger fares as demand grows.

Valo is targeting certification in 2028, supporting entry into service in the U.S. and international markets with airline and operator customers, including American Airlines. Its arrival in New York marks the first opportunity for U.S. investors, customers, partners, and the public to experience the aircraft at full scale.

Alongside the U.S. Valo model tour, Vertical Aerospace is working closely with Bristow Group and Skyports Infrastructure to evaluate future electric air mobility operations across the New York metropolitan area. The collaboration focuses on operational feasibility, infrastructure integration, and practical use cases that could dramatically reduce journey times across one of the world's most congested urban regions.

Proposed routes include airport transfers between Manhattan and major regional airports such as John F. Kennedy International Airport, cutting multi-hour road journeys to minutes. Other use cases under evaluation include event-day travel to venues like MetLife Stadium, aerial sightseeing and air tours departing from Downtown Manhattan, premium leisure travel to East Hampton, and quieter cross-town urban transfers linking existing heliports. Emergency medical transfers are also being explored, leveraging Valo's zero-emissions, low-noise design.

New York City represents a natural proving ground for advanced air mobility, given its density, congestion, premium travel demand, and established heliport network. The initiative builds on Vertical's recent UK collaboration with Bristow and Skyports, which outlines electric air taxi routes between Canary Wharf and major London transport hubs, including Heathrow Airport.

To mark Valo's U.S. debut, the aircraft will be displayed publicly on Friday, January 23, 2026, at the Classic Car Club Manhattan, Pier 76. Visitors will be able to experience Valo at full scale and engage with Vertical's teams on technology, certification, and operational readiness—offering a tangible glimpse into the next chapter of electric urban aviation.

BARQ GROUP SIGNS INITIAL AGREEMENT WITH ELROY AIR TO SET UP $200M JV FOR CHAPARRAL MANUFACTURING AND SERVICES IN ABU DHABI

B arq Group, the leader in smart mobility and logistics solutions in the MENA region, and Elroy Air, the leading U.S.-based developer of autonomous aerial systems for middle-mile logistics announced the signing of an initial agreement. This collaboration between the parties establishes the framework for a joint venture (JV) that will invest $200M to build a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Abu Dhabi to produce the Chaparral, an autonomous hybrid-electric vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) cargo UAS. This production facility will supply Chaparral systems to commercial and humanitarian customers in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region upon receipt of all necessary approvals. The JV will also provide aftermarket services, including maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO). By establishing local production capacity, the JV will meet the surging demand for autonomous logistics in a region characterized by rapid expansion and a need for resilient, middle-mile delivery solutions.

The Chaparral is an industry-first autonomous aircraft built to carry 300 lbs of cargo over a 300 mile range. Its hybrid-electric powertrain enables long-range missions without the need for charging infrastructure, making it uniquely suited for the MENA region's diverse geography. Chaparral made history in November 2023 with the world's first flight of a turbogenerator-hybrid-electric aircraft.

"Our partnership with Elroy Air is a testament to Abu Dhabi's position as a global leader in the future of mobility," said Ahmed AlMazrui, CEO of Barq Group. "This $200 million investment is more than a manufacturing agreement; it is a commitment to building a self-sustaining aerospace ecosystem in the UAE. The massive demand we are seeing from logistics providers across MENA makes it clear that local production is the only way to scale effectively. Together, we are redefining how goods move across the region while supporting the 'Make it in the Emirates' initiative."

The new venture aligns with Abu Dhabi's Smart and Autonomous Vehicle Industry (SAVI) cluster objectives, solidifying the emirate's position as a global leader in sustainable transportation. The partnership is expected to contribute significantly to the local economy through the creation of high-value aerospace jobs and the development of a robust regional supply chain.

"Demand for the Chaparral in the MENA region has been immense, surpassing our initial projections and highlighting the urgent need for infrastructure-independent logistics," said Dr. Andrew Clare, CEO of Elroy Air. "Abu Dhabi is the ideal strategic hub for our first international manufacturing footprint. By producing the Chaparral locally with Barq Group, we are not only reducing lead times for our regional customers but ensuring the aircraft is built in the same environment where they will operate. We are thrilled to partner with a visionary leader like Ahmed AlMazrui to bring this next-generation capability to the UAE."

BRISTOW SIGNS LAUNCH AGREEMENT WITH ELECTRA TO SECURE 1ST DELIVERY SLOT FOR EL9 AIRCRAFT

E lectra.aero, Inc. (Electra), the aerospace company pioneering Direct Aviation, and Bristow Group Inc. the global leader in innovative and sustainable vertical flight solutions, signed a Pre-Delivery Payment (PDP) deposit agreement with binding terms and conditions aligned to the commercial aviation industry standard, subject to aircraft certification, securing the first delivery slot for Electra's EL9 Ultra Short hybrid-electric aircraft, capable of carrying nine passengers with baggage or 3,000 pounds of cargo for 330 nautical miles, and has a maximum ferry range of 1,100 nautical miles with IFR reserves.

By securing the earliest EL9 deliveries with its PDP agreement, Bristow confirms the Company's leadership role in shaping the future of Direct Aviation, positioning itself to offer customers unprecedented point-to-point access, dramatically reduced travel times, and entirely new opportunities for regional mobility.

Bristow and Electra have worked together for five years, starting with a pre-order agreement in 2021. The parties have now converted their pre-order LOI into a fixed agreement for five EL9 delivery slots, all to be delivered in the EL9's first year of production. By reserving these early slots, Bristow has secured unmatched early access to an aircraft set to redefine how people and goods move.

The PDP agreement includes option rights for Bristow to another 45 aircraft at the same fixed terms.

Bristow plans to deploy the EL9 across turnkey mobility solutions for corporate customers, premier destinations and resorts, major and regional airlines, and government agencies operating essential public service routes.

With more than seven decades of experience operating complex helicopter and fixed-wing missions for corporate and government customers around the world, Bristow has a proven history of integrating next-generation aviation technologies. The EL9 Ultra Short's ability to take off and land in just 150 feet will allow Bristow to open new transportation options, strengthening airline networks and significantly reducing travel times.

"Bristow has a long and respected track record of safely operating complex missions in some of the most demanding environments on earth," said Marc Allen, CEO of Electra. "We are proud to welcome Bristow as an EL9 Launch Customer. By reserving five delivery slots in the EL9's first year of production, to include slot one, they have made a powerful statement of confidence in Electra, our EL9 aircraft, and the future of Direct Aviation. We could not imagine a stronger or more capable partner to lead the introduction of this transformative mode of advanced air mobility that will give communities, travelers, and airlines access to fast, flexible, and sustainable transportation."

"Electra's EL9 fundamentally changes what regional air mobility can be," said Dave Stepanek, Bristow Executive Vice President, Chief Transformation Officer. "Its ultra-short performance, quiet operation, and lower operating costs create opportunities that simply do not exist with today's aircraft. Securing delivery slot one and reserving delivery slots in the first year of production ensures Bristow will lead this new industry and bring advanced air mobility capabilities to our customers first. We are confident that with this order we will extend our legacy of innovation and deliver new levels of access, speed, and sustainability to our customers across the many markets we serve."

SKYDRIVE PARTNERS WITH SASMOS FOR EWIS DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING FOR SKYDRIVE SD-05 PRODUCTION AIRCRAFT

SkyDrive Inc. a leading eVTOL aircraft manufacturer based in Japan, announced that it has entered into a development agreement with SASMOS HET Technologies Ltd. ("SASMOS"), an Indian aerospace and defence engineering and manufacturing company, for the design of the Electrical Wiring Interconnection System (EWIS) for its eVTOL, the "SKYDRIVE" (SkyDrive Model SD-05).

Under this agreement, SASMOS will deliver a comprehensive EWIS solution including system design, prototyping, certification support, and serial production readiness.

The agreement enables SkyDrive to advance the "SKYDRIVE" program by reinforcing aircraft reliability and manufacturability, while laying the groundwork for scalable production as the company moves toward commercialization. SASMOS designs and manufactures EWIS for aircraft and has a proven track record of participation in aircraft programs serving major global OEMs and Tier 1 suppliers, including The Boeing Company,

Airbus SE, and Honeywell International Inc..

SkyDrive's mission is to "lead the once-in-a-century mobility revolution" by developing eVTOLs which seamlessly integrate the skies into daily transportation. Following successful demonstration flights at the Expo 2025 in Osaka(*2), the company is now focused on its next major milestone: achieving full-scale commercialization by 2028. As eVTOL aircraft adopt high-voltage electric propulsion systems and increasingly complex architectures, wiring systems are required to meet stringent requirements for safety, reliability, weight optimization, and manufacturability. Through this partnership, SkyDrive aims to enhance aircraft

reliability, manufacturability, and readiness for future mass production. Tomohiro Fukuzawa, CEO of SkyDrive, commented: "We are pleased to begin this collaboration with SASMOS, a partner with strong experience in aerospace wiring systems. For eVTOL aircraft, where electrification is central to both performance and safety, the design and execution of wiring systems are fundamental to building aircraft that can be produced reliably and at scale. By working closely with SASMOS, we intend to reinforce the maturity of our production aircraft and advance toward stable, high-quality manufacturing as we prepare for commercialization."

HG Chandrashekar, Chairman & Managing Director, SASMOS said: "We are honoured to partner with SkyDrive on this groundbreaking eVTOL programme. This collaboration embodies the shared vision of India and Japan to advance sustainable technologies and demonstrates SASMOS' capability to deliver globally certified aerospace systems of the highest reliability and quality."

REPUBLIC OF SERBIA AIMS TO CATALYZE EUROPEAN ADOPTION OF AIR TAXIS, SELECTS ARCHER AS PREFERRED PARTNER

Archer Aviation Inc. announced a partnership with the Government of the Republic of Serbia as the country seeks to play a key role in driving the adoption of electric air taxis across Europe. Under the agreement, Serbia has selected Archer as its preferred eVTOL partner and has the option to purchase an initial fleet of Midnight aircraft. The agreement provides for the purchase of up to 25 aircraft, in accordance with the applicable legal framework.

The agreement was signed at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland in the presence of the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vucic, and Archer Founder and CEO Adam Goldstein, formally establishing Archer as Serbia's preferred air taxi partner.

This collaboration builds on Archer's already announced public-private partnerships to launch air taxis in other international markets, including the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, India, Japan and Korea.

As part of the partnership, Archer will serve as the official air taxi partner for EXPO 2027 Belgrade, which will take place from May through August 2027. Serbia plans to use the event as a showcase of next generation transportation, demonstrating the benefits of advanced air mobility to the global audience in attendance.

Serbia was selected to host EXPO 2027 following a competitive international process and is expected to welcome millions of visitors from more than 130 countries. The event is set to drive major investment in infrastructure

and transportation, leaving a lasting legacy for Belgrade and the broader region.

"When we were given the opportunity to host such a significant event as Belgrade Expo 2027, we knew that we wanted to take a step forward when it comes to new technologies, technological innovations, artificial intelligence and more. That is why it was important for us to bring the first air taxis to Belgrade, and we look forward to fulfilling that promise," said First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Siniša Mali, who signed the contract on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

"I met the President of Serbia last year at the World Economic Forum where we immediately connected over a shared vision for the future of transportation," said Adam

Goldstein, Founder and CEO of Archer Aviation. "The Republic of Serbia presents another demand signal for eVTOL aircraft, and another opportunity to deploy our aircraft and build operational expertise."

In addition, Archer entered into a strategic dialogue with the Government of the Republic of Serbia to explore further development work on industrialization, including rare earth magnets and critical minerals for batteries.

Serbia's participation in urban air mobility builds on Archer's growing international momentum as it prepares for initial commercial operations in multiple global markets. Archer continues to progress its Midnight flight test program and certification activities while expanding partnerships with governments and operators worldwide.

FAA Announces Expansion of UAS Test Site Network
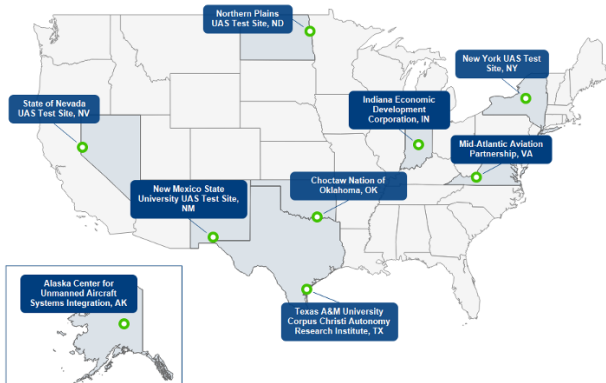
The Federal Aviation Administration has announced the addition of new locations to its network of unmanned aircraft system (UAS) test sites, expanding the infrastructure available to support innovation, research, and operational testing across the United States. The expanded network is designed to accelerate development and evaluation of advanced drone technologies, including beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) deployments, detect-and-avoid systems, and emerging integration tools for the national airspace.

The newly designated test sites will join the existing network, which has played a key role in advancing regulatory frameworks, safety case development, and real-world experimentation for commercial and government partners. By offering controlled environments where operators, manufacturers, and researchers can trial new concepts and systems, the expanded network aims to reduce barriers to entry for emerging unmanned aviation applications and foster collaboration among industry, academia, and regulatory bodies.

Officials noted that the expanded test site programme aligns with broader UAS integration strategies that seek to safely incorporate unmanned operations alongside crewed aviation. These strategies include structured risk management processes, shared data ecosystems, and operational procedures that support scalable, routine use cases. The additional locations are expected to provide diversified geographic and airspace conditions, enabling testing under a wider range of scenarios and environmental conditions.

Participants in the expanded network will have access to surveillance infrastructure, communications systems, and airspace coordination tools that support both foundational research and performance-based evaluation of UAS technologies. This includes capabilities for simulating complex flight profiles and assessing system interactions in controlled settings before wider deployment in public airspace.

The FAA's announcement was welcomed by industry stakeholders, who see the move as an important investment in domestic innovation and competitiveness. By strengthening the national UAS test ecosystem, the expanded programme is anticipated to support advancements in logistics, public safety, infrastructure inspection, and other sectors where drones are poised to play an increasing role.

AMAZON LAUNCHES TRIAL DRONE FLIGHTS FROM DARLINGTON FULFILMENT CENTRE

Amazon has begun trial drone delivery flights from its fulfilment centre in Darlington, marking a significant milestone in the company's efforts to introduce its Prime Air service in the United Kingdom. The trials represent an early operational phase ahead of a planned commercial rollout targeted for 2026.

The test flights are being conducted using Amazon's latest MK30 drone, which has been designed with enhanced safety, reliability, and noise-reduction features. While the current phase does not involve customer deliveries, the programme is focused on validating flight procedures, system performance, and integration with local airspace under regulatory oversight.

Amazon is working closely with the UK Civil Aviation Authority to ensure the trials meet all safety and compliance requirements. The MK30 drone incorporates advanced detect-and-avoid technology, enabling it to autonomously identify and steer clear of obstacles, people, and other aircraft during flight. The aircraft has also been engineered to operate more quietly, addressing community concerns around noise.

Once operational approval is secured, Prime Air is expected to offer eligible customers the option to receive lightweight items within minutes of placing an order, complementing Amazon's existing ground-based logistics network. The service is aimed at improving delivery speed, reducing road congestion, and lowering emissions for short-range deliveries.

Darlington's selection as a trial location places the region at the forefront of the UK's emerging drone delivery ecosystem. The programme builds on Amazon's prior Prime Air operations in other countries and reflects growing regulatory and industry momentum toward routine unmanned delivery services.

WING LAUNCHES NEW DRONE DELIVERY SERVICE FOR WALMART SHOPPERS IN HOUSTON

Wing, the autonomous delivery division of Alphabet, has announced a new drone delivery service for customers of Walmart in the greater Houston area, expanding its footprint in the rapidly evolving last-mile logistics market. The initiative aims to provide residents with convenient, on-demand deliveries of everyday essentials directly to their doorsteps via unmanned aircraft.

The service — operating under a collaborative agreement between Wing and Walmart — enables eligible customers to place online orders for items ranging from groceries and household goods to personal care products and pet supplies. Once an order is confirmed, Wing's autonomous drones transport the goods from participating Walmart stores to customers' homes, often completing delivery in minutes rather

Greater Houston kicks off Walmart & Wing's biggest expansion year yet

than hours. This deployment highlights the maturing ecosystem for commercial drone logistics, especially in urban and suburban environments.

Houston was selected as an early launch market due to its dense population, diverse logistics demand, and supportive local regulatory environment for beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) and autonomous delivery operations. Wing has worked with local authorities and aviation regulators to ensure safe integration of drone

flights into the region's airspace, including coordinated routing and community outreach efforts.

Customers in the rollout area can track deliveries in real time using Wing's mobile app, which provides estimated arrival times and alerts as packages descend. The service underscores growing consumer appetite for fast, contactless delivery solutions that alleviate traffic congestion and reduce ground-based emissions.

Wing's expansion with Walmart builds on previous successful partnerships and reflects broader industry momentum toward scalable, reliable drone delivery at commercial scale. As the technology continues to prove itself in real-world deployments, similar services are expected to proliferate in other U.S. regions where regulatory frameworks and logistics infrastructure support autonomous aerial operations.

XER-TECH SECURES BVLOS APPROVALS IN SWITZERLAND AND HUNGARY

XerTech has attained official regulatory approvals enabling beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) drone operations in both Switzerland and Hungary, marking a notable expansion in its European operational footprint. These authorisations allow the company to conduct complex unmanned missions over extended distances without requiring continuous visual contact between pilots and their aircraft — a major step forward for scalable commercial drone services in these markets.

In Switzerland, Xer-Tech achieved clearance from national aviation authorities to undertake BVLOS flights under a structured regulatory framework that balances operational flexibility with stringent safety oversight. This approval reflects the Swiss authority's trust in the company's safety case, risk assessments, and ability to integrate unmanned flights into existing airspace structures. Meanwhile, Hungarian regulators have also granted Xer-Tech permissions to advance BVLOS operations, further validating the robustness of its operational procedures, technical standards, and compliance strategy.

Both approvals stem from comprehensive submissions demonstrating risk mitigation measures, communications and surveillance technologies, and operational controls that align with European and national requirements for long-range UAV deployments. These permissions will

enable Xer-Tech to support a variety of use cases — from industrial inspection and data collection to logistics and infrastructure monitoring — in environments where extended range and autonomy are essential.

Industry observers note that securing such approvals across multiple jurisdictions showcases both Xer-Tech's regulatory capabilities and the maturing landscape of European BVLOS governance. As national authorities continue to refine performance-based frameworks, successful

operators like Xer-Tech can help shape best practices, technologies, and safety standards that underpin routine unmanned flights beyond sight.

The expanded authorisations in Switzerland and Hungary position Xer-Tech to scale commercial operations while contributing operational data and insights to broader airspace integration efforts across the continent. This progress underscores how coordinated regulatory engagement and strong safety cases can unlock advanced drone services in Europe.

SKYLIFT BVLOS MEDICAL DELIVERY TRIALS SUPPORT UK CAA'S INTEGRATED AIRSPACE AMBITIONS

A series of beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) medical delivery trials conducted by Skylift has bolstered plans by the Civil Aviation Authority for an integrated low-altitude airspace framework in the United Kingdom. The trials, focused on transporting medical supplies across operationally challenging routes, demonstrate practical progress toward routine BVLOS operations that mesh safely with existing air traffic and ground infrastructure.

Skylift's programme involved unmanned flights that delivered critical healthcare payloads over distances and terrain that would typically require time-consuming ground transport. These missions were executed in collaboration with healthcare partners and airspace stakeholders, providing data on route management, risk mitigation, and end-to-end operational robustness. By validating real-world procedures and safety cases, the flights have contributed important operational evidence to support regulatory planning.

The UK CAA has been advancing proposals for an integrated airspace system that would enable higher volumes of diverse air traffic—including crewed aircraft, drones, and advanced air mobility vehicles—to coexist under unified traffic management and separation standards. Skylift's trials align with this vision by showing that disciplined BVLOS operations can be executed in controlled environments without compromising safety or efficiency.

Key lessons from the medical delivery flights include refined procedures for pre-flight planning, detect-and-avoid systems performance, and communication protocols. Stakeholders noted that establishing clear pathways for data sharing and flight authorisation will be essential as BVLOS operations scale.

Regulators and industry participants see these trials as a crucial step toward operationalising the CAA's integrated airspace concept. They help highlight practical considerations, such as risk profiles, airspace segmentation, and collaborative oversight, that will shape policy and technical standards for future unmanned operations across the UK.

UNIFLY CONSULTING AND SCANDINAVIAN DRONE SOLUTIONS JOIN FORCES TO ADVANCE BVLOS OPERATIONS

Unifly Consulting has partnered with Scandinavian Drone Solutions to jointly support beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) and other complex unmanned aircraft system (UAS) operations across Europe. The collaboration strengthens Unifly Consulting's footprint in Northern Europe while combining regulatory expertise with hands-on operational experience.

The partnership aims to help drone operators, manufacturers, and service providers navigate Europe's increasingly mature regulatory landscape, particularly for advanced operations conducted under the Specific category. Together, the two companies will offer integrated services covering regulatory compliance, operational risk assessments, training, and operational readiness for BVLOS and other high-complexity missions.

Scandinavian Drone Solutions contributes strong regional knowledge and practical experience in UAS consultancy, training, and safety risk analysis. The company works closely with operators on real-world deployments, supporting projects ranging from infrastructure inspection and mapping to industrial and rural BVLOS operations. Its experience is particularly relevant for operators transitioning legacy platforms or managing compliance for drones operating outside densely populated areas.

Unifly Consulting brings established expertise in regulatory frameworks such as SORA, predefined risk assessments, and standardized scenarios, along with capabilities in design verification, CE marking guidance, and tailored training programs. By aligning regulatory strategy with operational realities, the partnership seeks to reduce approval timelines and improve the scalability of drone operations.

Together, Unifly Consulting and Scandinavian Drone Solutions aim to transform regulatory requirements into practical, deployable solutions—enabling safe, compliant, and commercially viable BVLOS operations. The collaboration reflects growing demand for expert support as European drone activity expands beyond visual operations and into more complex, mission-critical use cases.

ZIPLINE TO EXPAND U.S. DELIVERIES INTO FOUR MORE STATES IN 2026

Zipline, the autonomous logistics provider known for medical and critical supplies deliveries, has announced plans to expand its operations into four additional U.S. states during 2026. The move builds on the company's ongoing efforts to scale its fixed-wing, long-range drone delivery network, which aims to broaden access to rapid logistics across more communities and healthcare systems.

Since launching commercial operations in the United States, Zipline has focused on delivering time-sensitive medical products—including blood supplies, vaccines, and emergency equipment—using its autonomous aircraft. The expansion signals growing demand for beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) services that can deliver essential goods to remote, underserved, and rural populations, reducing dependency on ground transport and shortening delivery timeframes for critical healthcare needs.

Zipline's network model combines proprietary aircraft, flight planning systems, and automated logistics infrastructure to manage high-frequency, high-reliability deliveries across scalable routes. The company's operational philosophy emphasizes predictable scheduling, integration with existing healthcare supply chains, and secure, compliant practices that align with evolving aviation regulations.

State and local authorities in the targeted expansion areas have been collaborating with Zipline to support testing, airspace coordination, and regulatory approvals needed to enable regular delivery flights. These partnerships are anchored in safety risk assessments, community engagement frameworks, and plans for airspace sharing with conventional aviation activities.

Industry observers view Zipline's continued growth as part of a broader shift toward routine long-range unmanned logistics services in the U.S. As regulators work to refine airspace rules for BVLOS operations, operational deployments like Zipline's offer practical insights into safety case development, route management, and the integration of autonomous aircraft into national airspace systems.

The 2026 expansion is expected to not only increase the geographic reach of Zipline's services but also deepen support for cutting-edge logistics applications that improve access to healthcare and critical supplies across vast areas.

OHIO LAUNCHES FIRST STEP IN NATIONWIDE BVLOS AIRSPACE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The U.S. is advancing its vision for beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) drone operations through a new initiative in Ohio that marks a major milestone in nationwide airspace management capabilities. A collaborative effort between state and federal authorities has brought the first operational segment of a BVLOS airspace management system online, establishing foundational infrastructure that could support scalable commercial drone missions across the country.

This initial deployment is designed to enable extended drone operations beyond the pilot's visual line of sight, addressing a key technical and regulatory challenge that has historically limited large-scale autonomous and long-distance unmanned aircraft missions. By providing coordinated, real-time management of unmanned and manned aircraft activity, the system aims to enhance safety, efficiency, and predictability for both routine and complex BVLOS flights.

The initiative leverages integration with existing aviation surveillance and communications networks, enabling authorities and operators to share position, route intention, and detection data with precision across controlled airspace. This capability supports more sophisticated airspace deconfliction, dynamic flight authorization, and situational awareness tools that advance safe coexistence of drones and conventional aircraft.

Officials involved in the project highlight that establishing an operational BVLOS airspace management framework is a critical step toward unlocking high-value commercial missions—such as infrastructure inspection, logistics, and emergency response—which depend on extended reach and autonomy. The Ohio deployment also serves as a live testbed for refining technical standards, operational procedures, and regulatory interfaces that will guide similar rollouts in other regions.

As BVLOS operations become increasingly integral to the broader unmanned aviation ecosystem, implementing scalable airspace management systems like Ohio's represents a foundational building block for the future of national air transport integration.

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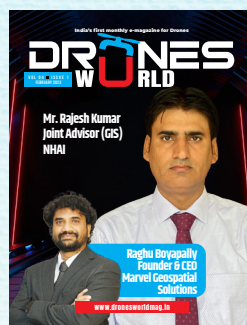

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Committed Partner for Indian Aerospace & Defence Programs

Facilities

- **Complete satellite manufacturing facilities under one roof**
- **Launch Vehicles Facilities**
- **Design and Manufacture of Space and Defence Equipment**
- **Contributed to 91 Satellites and 71 Launch vehicles so far**
- **In-house environmental test facilities**
- **Class 100K, 10 clean rooms with SMT Production lines**

Products

- **Assembly, Integration & Testing (AIT) of Satellites for LEO and for GEO orbits**
- **Digital & Embedded systems**
- **EW systems & Simulators**
- **Laser & Optical Systems**
- **Sights for weapons**
- **AIT of Launch Vehicles**
- **Telemetry & Tracking systems**
- **On-board computing systems**
- **Sensor Systems**
- **Navigation & Controls systems**
- **RF and Microwave systems**

Meeting Quality & Reliability Standards for Space & Defence programs
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