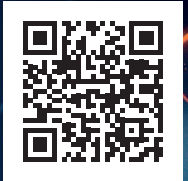


Global monthly magazine for Drones



# DRONES WORLD

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**B. KARTIKEYA**

Hello Readers,

The global drone and autonomous systems industry is entering one of its most defining phases yet. Across defence, homeland security, logistics, AI autonomy, and counter-UAS operations, the pace of innovation is no longer measured in years – but in months. From Europe to the Indo-Pacific, governments and industry leaders are accelerating investments into scalable autonomous capabilities, AI-powered ISR, and layered drone defence systems.

This edition of Drones World captures this transformation through exclusive interviews, strategic industry coverage, and a special preview of Xponential 2026 – one of the world's leading events focused on autonomy, robotics, AI, and unmanned systems.

A major highlight of this issue is our exclusive interview with Andreas Thiel, CEO of u-blox, where he discusses the future of high-precision GNSS technology, resilient navigation systems, and secure autonomous drone operations. The interview explores how u-blox's latest innovations are addressing critical UAV challenges including motion-independent heading, GNSS interference resilience, centimeter-level positioning accuracy, and end-to-end security for next-generation drone ecosystems.

We also feature an exclusive interview with Alex Pachikov, CEO of Sunflower Labs, who shares insights into how autonomous drone security systems are redefining perimeter protection, AI-driven surveillance, and rapid-response infrastructure monitoring. As demand grows for intelligent aerial security ecosystems, Sunflower Labs continues to position itself at the forefront of autonomous drone-enabled security innovation.

This edition additionally presents a special Xponential 2026 Preview, exploring the technologies and strategic themes expected to shape the next phase of the autonomy revolution. From AI-enabled ISR and swarm systems to urban air mobility, autonomous logistics, defence robotics, and advanced counter-UAS solutions, Xponential 2026 is expected to become a major global platform for breakthrough innovations, strategic collaborations, and next-generation operational concepts. The event will bring together defence organisations, aerospace leaders, startups, investors, and technology innovators shaping the future of autonomous operations worldwide.

Another defining trend extensively covered in this issue is the rapid rise of counter-drone capability development globally. Governments and defence agencies are rapidly investing in mobile, modular, and cost-effective CUAS systems to address evolving aerial threats. Companies including Saab, HENSOLDT, DroneShield, Fortem Technologies, and ParaZero are advancing layered drone defence architectures that combine AI, radar, electronic warfare, and autonomous interception technologies into operationally deployable solutions.

As autonomy becomes central to future aerospace and defence strategies, the unmanned systems industry is entering a new era defined by speed, scalability, resilience, and operational relevance. Drones World remains committed to bringing readers exclusive executive perspectives, industry intelligence, and global coverage of the technologies shaping the future of autonomous systems worldwide.

## UK ANNOUNCES BIGGEST EVER DRONE PACKAGE FOR UKRAINE TO PUSH BACK PUTIN

The UK has announced the biggest ever drone package for Ukraine, delivering at least 120,000 drones for Ukraine this year and driving growth and jobs across the UK. It comes as the Defence Secretary travels to Berlin today to co-chair the 34th meeting of the 50-nation strong Ukraine Defence Contact Group in Berlin, alongside German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius, Ukrainian Minister of Defence Mykhailo Fedorov, and NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte.

The new package, the largest of its kind ever supplied by the UK, will include thousands of long-range strike drones, intelligence and reconnaissance drones, logistics drones and maritime capabilities, which are all battle-proven on Ukraine's frontline. Deliveries of these new drones to Ukraine have already started this month.

Drones are proving critical to both Ukrainian counterattacks across the frontline over the past months, as well as their defence against continued Russian attacks. Approximately 6,500 one-way attack drones were launched by Russia against Ukraine in March 2026, a significant increase on February's total.

In a boost to British business, the majority of this investment will be spent with UK-based companies, including Tekever, Windracers and Malloy Aeronautics - creating new UK jobs whilst defending Ukraine's security and sovereignty. The British drone sector is rapidly advancing, and supports both UK security and wider European deterrence, while driving skills and innovation in every region of the UK.

Defence Secretary John Healey MP said: "In the fifth year of Putin's brutal war, the UK is stepping up further and providing the highest ever number of drones



for Ukraine this year."

"This big boost of battle-proven drones will give Ukrainian forces the capability they need to defend their people and fight back against Russian aggression."

"With eyes on the Middle East in recent weeks, Putin wants us to be distracted, but Ukrainians continue to fight with huge courage and nothing will distract us from continuing to stand with them for as long as it takes to secure peace."

The new drone package is backed by the UK's wider £3 billion military support for Ukraine this year, as well as ERA funding. The Defence Secretary will also confirm that the UK will be providing hundreds of thousands of artillery rounds and thousands of air defence missiles for Ukraine this year.

This follows the new world-leading defence partnership, agreed last month, that will see the UK and Ukraine work together to boost global defensive capability against the proliferation of low cost, high tech military hardware, including drones.

The UK continues to play a leading role in international support, with Healey convening and co-chairing the Ukraine Defence Contact Group alongside Germany, working closely with allies across NATO and beyond. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves is also expected to announce further support for Ukraine later today at a meeting of international finance ministers in Washington DC. Today's announcement builds on the UK's recent £500 million air defence package announced in February at the Ukraine Defence Contact Group at NATO headquarters in Brussels.

That package included £150 million for NATO's Prioritised Ukraine Requirements List (PURL) initiative, enabling the rapid delivery of air defence interceptors, alongside the provision of more than 1,000 Lightweight Multirole Missiles manufactured in Belfast. It also supported a £390 million deal to boost collaboration between UK and Ukrainian industry, including the transfer of production and support for air defence systems to Ukraine.

## CLONE OF UAVOS UTILIZES IN-HOUSE MANUFACTURED COMPOSITE CURING OVEN TO PRODUCE UAV ROTOR BLADES WITH EXTENDED SERVICE LIFE



UAVOS announces the successful implementation of an advanced manufacturing technology for its composite rotor blades: core sintering without additional mechanical processing. This technology enables the internal structure of a composite rotor blade to be formed with high precision directly during manufacturing. As a result, it improves geometric stability, enhances structural reliability, and reduces production costs.

UAVOS rotor blades are manufactured in-house using the company's proprietary composite curing oven and are subject to strict internal quality control. The rotor blades have also been tested for overload resistance and environmental reliability by an independent European laboratory, further confirming their suitability for demanding unmanned rotorcraft applications.

The rotor blades have a proven service life of 3,000 hours. Their advanced construction is based on the latest carbon multi-cross-layer technology. The UAVOS engineering team has incorporated the NACA 23012 airfoil design, which provides strong aerodynamic efficiency and improved performance under high-load operating conditions.

UAVOS engineers designed the rotor blade with a 10° twist, enhancing aerodynamic efficiency and improving overall flight performance. For rotorcraft, this is especially important, as an optimized blade twist helps reduce fuel consumption and extend flight endurance.

"As an OEM, we continue to invest in advanced production technologies to deliver high-performance UAV components while maintaining competitive pricing and manufacturing efficiency," said Aliaksei Stratsilatau, Founder and CEO of UAVOS.

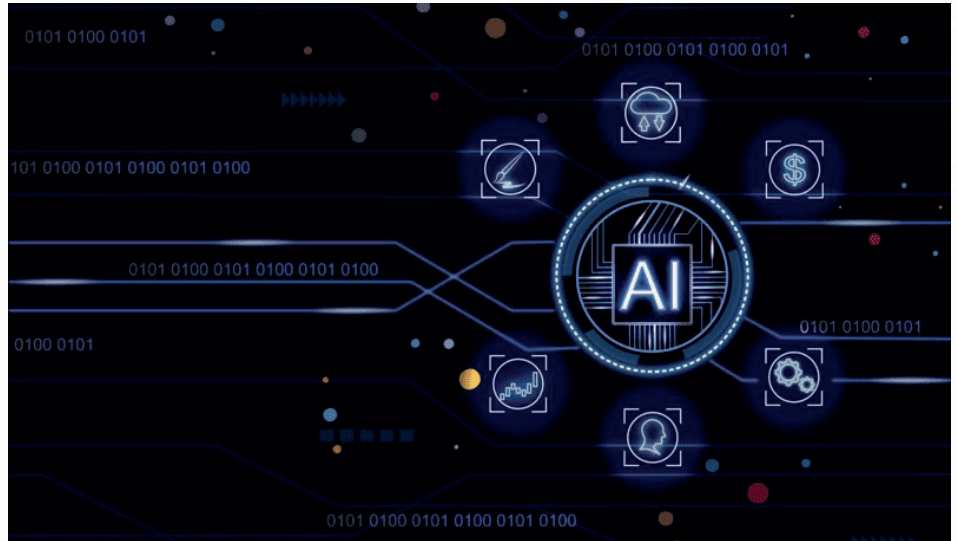
## PALLADYNE AI SECURES ADDITIONAL FOUNDATIONAL SWARMING US PATENT ON AI-DRIVEN PATH CREATION, TARGET DETECTION, AND BEHAVIORAL PREDICTION

Palladyne AI a U.S.-based defense and industrial technology company commercializing embedded AI, collaborative autonomy, and advanced avionics for defense markets announced the issuance of U.S. Patent 12,517,525 B1, titled "Path Creation, Detection and Prediction Using Primitives," protecting its proprietary Bayesian Program Learning (BPL) framework for intelligent target recognition, autonomous path planning, and real-time behavioral prediction across multiple types of sensors deployed across multi-domain environments (space, air, land, and maritime).

"We believe our patented BPL framework does three things no conventional AI system can match at the edge: it recognizes targets across multiple sensor types without the cloud, it turns a spoken instruction into an optimized robotic motion plan in seconds, and it keeps tracking even when the signal goes dark," said Denis Garagic, CTO, Co-Founder, and Named Inventor, Palladyne AI.

This patent represents a significant expansion of Palladyne AI's intellectual property portfolio and strengthens its competitive position across high-value commercial and defense markets covering three distinct capability domains:

**Target Recognition:** Detects, classifies, and tracks moving targets across EO, IR, LIDAR, radar, acoustic, and RF sensors: fully on-device, without cloud connectivity.



**Autonomous Path Planning:** Converts natural-language commands into optimized motion plans without manual reprogramming which accelerates deployment and reduces task changeover time from hours to minutes in manufacturing, logistics, and field operations.

**Behavioral Prediction & Track Continuity:** Predicts target behavior even through sensor dropout, occlusion, or jamming which enables persistent tracking in communications-denied and degraded environments.

"This patent is a direct expression of the long-term value we are building at Palladyne AI," said Ben Wolff, President and CEO, Palladyne AI. "Our framework is not incremental, it is a fundamentally different approach to machine intelligence. We believe this IP is revolutionary and will compound in value as autonomous systems become central to both defense and industrial customers as they accelerate adoption of trusted, edge-native autonomy."

## SKYDIO OPENS NEW R&D OFFICE IN ZÜRICH, SWITZERLAND

Skydio, the leading U.S.-based drone manufacturer and world leader in autonomous flight, today announced the opening of a new research and development office in Zürich, Switzerland. The office will focus on advancing Skydio's autonomous multi-drone systems, with a team of engineers working at the frontier of robotics and flight autonomy.

Following the opening of its first European R&D office in Tampere, Finland, Skydio continues to expand its presence across the continent, this time in Zürich, Switzerland, the robotics capital of Europe. The move reflects Skydio's deliberate approach to building where the world's best talent is. The company's Bay Area headquarters sits adjacent to UC Berkeley and Stanford University, and its Boston office draws from MIT's deep engineering ecosystem. Zürich follows the same logic; ETH Zürich and the University of Zürich are among the most respected research institutions in autonomous systems globally.

"Zürich is home to one of the most dynamic robotics ecosystems in the world, where universities, startups, and global technology companies continuously exchange ideas



and talent. Skydio's decision to establish an R&D presence here both reflects and reinforces this strength, bringing challenging real-world autonomy problems into close dialogue with academic research. It is encouraging to see former members of our lab contributing to this effort, and to witness the local ecosystem continuing to translate cutting-edge research into impactful aerial robotics systems. Davide Scaramuzza, Professor of Robotics and Perception University of Zürich

Davide Falanga, Skydio's Director of Engineering, Autonomy Systems, will lead the new Zürich office. He has been with the company for more than four years at the San Mateo headquarters and brings deep expertise in building

reliable and scalable autonomous flight systems.

"Opening Skydio's Zürich office is a huge opportunity to build our next generation of autonomous flying robots at the heart of Europe's robotics hub. Switzerland offers an exceptional concentration of talent across perception, planning, and AI-driven autonomy. I'm excited to grow a team here that can push the frontier of what drones can do in the real world. Davide Falanga, Director of Engineering, Autonomy Systems | Head of Zürich Office Skydio

The Zürich office expands Skydio's global engineering footprint as the company accelerates development of its autonomous multi-drone platform. Engineers in Zürich will work closely with teams across Skydio's U.S. locations on core autonomy challenges, including multi-vehicle coordination, GPS-denied navigation, and real-time decision-making at the edge.

"With ETH Zürich at its core, Zürich is one of the world's most powerful robotics hubs — and we're thrilled as Skydio moves here. Together with exceptional talent and world-class research, we'll push the frontiers of aerial robotics. Roland Siegwart, Professor of Robotics ETH Zürich

## AI-POWERED DRONES TO DETECT EXPLOSIVE THREATS AND PROTECT MILITARY PERSONNEL

UK military personnel are set to benefit from enhanced battlefield protection following trials demonstrating that advanced artificial intelligence (AI) integrated into drone systems can rapidly identify emerging threats, including landmines and other explosive ordnance.

The major trial, conducted by the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) on behalf of the British Army, enabled explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) specialists to execute missions more efficiently through rapid threat detection.

Over several weeks, the trial was carried out with 33 Engineer Regiment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Search) at their base in Essex. Dozens of replica mines and ordnance devices were placed across diverse terrain and environmental conditions. Data captured by sensors onboard small uncrewed aerial systems (UAS) was transmitted to Army operators, who utilised AI tools to locate and identify munitions with increased speed and accuracy.

The trial also successfully demonstrated the capability to rapidly retrain AI models to recognise emerging threat types and adapt to different operational environments – a critical requirement in fast-evolving modern warfare, as evidenced by the conflict in Ukraine, where drones and explosive devices are reshaping the battlefield at pace.

Through its Strategic Defence Review, the UK government is doubling investment in autonomous platforms from £2 billion to £4 billion over this parliamentary term.



Minister for Defence Readiness and Industry, Luke Pollard MP, stated: "This trial exemplifies the innovation called for by the Strategic Defence Review – harnessing AI, drones, and autonomous systems to strengthen deterrence and enhance the capabilities of our Armed Forces. We are committed to leveraging new technologies to remove personnel from harm's way while increasing the speed and effectiveness

of their operations. This represents defence innovation operating at wartime pace, delivering compelling results."

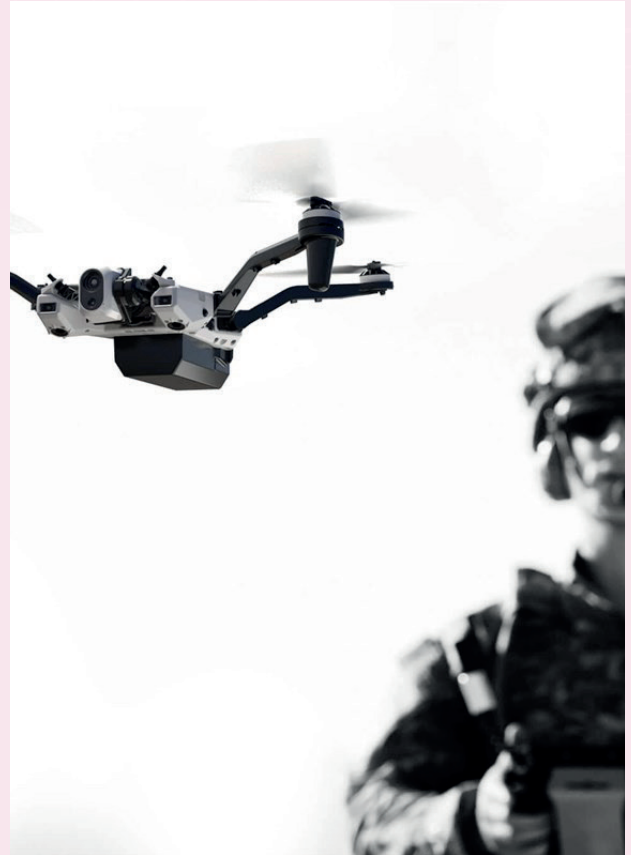
The trial demonstrates how AI, human-machine teaming, robotic and autonomous systems, and advanced sensors can significantly reduce risk to Armed Forces personnel. It forms part of a broader transformation of UK defence capability, informed by lessons from the conflict in Ukraine and outlined in the Strategic Defence Review.

**Dstl's Technical Lead for the trial commented:** "The threat posed by explosive ordnance is constantly evolving, and so too must the tools and techniques required to address it safely. Dstl brings comprehensive expertise in science and technology, alongside specialist industry suppliers. Through rigorous testing, adaptation, and demonstration, and in close collaboration with end users, we are developing concepts that enable our forces to remain competitive on the modern battlefield."

Major Mark Fetters, British Army Future Counter-Explosive Ordnance Capability Lead, added: "The modern battlefield is saturated with explosive ordnance. The equipment being developed by Dstl will enable EOD operators to conduct missions more rapidly and will remove personnel from explosive hazards. We are also examining how this capability will evolve as other technologies mature. As sensors become lighter, more power-efficient, and smaller, they will be deployable on smaller uncrewed aerial systems – continuously enhancing the capability available to our EOD and Search personnel."

Building on these results, further trials will take place this year to mature the technology and guide the procurement of a deployable capability that can be placed directly into the hands of soldiers. The UK government has committed to delivering a tenfold increase in lethality for the British Army over the next decade by harnessing firepower, surveillance technology, autonomy, digital connectivity, and data.

## RED CAT SECURES NEW ORDERS FOR BLACK WIDOW DRONES FROM NATO ALLY



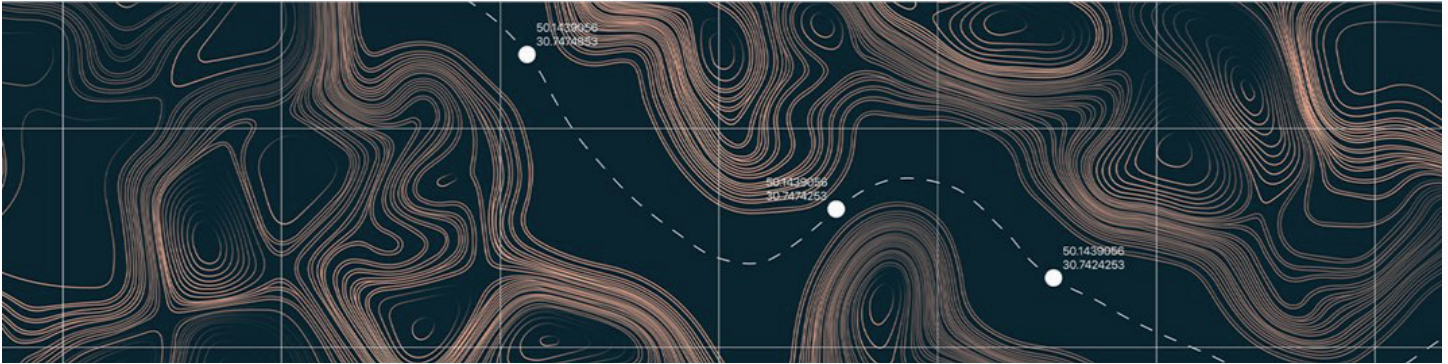
Red Cat Holdings, Inc a U.S.-based provider of advanced all-domain drone and robotic solutions for defense and national security announced that in March 2026, a NATO ally selected its Black Widow™ sUAS on a competitive tender, with delivery of an undisclosed number of systems scheduled for delivery during calendar year 2026. The contract was facilitated through NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA).

Each system includes two Black Widow aircraft, a ground control station (GCS), and other mission-critical components.

"This contract reflects a broader shift toward systems that can move quickly from procurement to deployment," said Jeff Thompson, CEO of Red Cat. "NATO allies need platforms that are deployable today for use in contested environments, built on secure U.S. supply chains, and able to be manufactured and fielded at scale. Black Widow is designed for that reality, delivering reliable ISR at the tactical edge where speed, readiness, and electronic warfare resilience are critical to mission success."

The Black Widow™ is Red Cat's flagship small, unmanned aircraft system (sUAS), engineered for tactical edge ISR missions with a compact, rugged design and secure communications architecture. Built in the U.S. and compliant with the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), the platform is a key part of Red Cat's Family of Systems, offering modular, scalable solutions across multiple operational domains.

## BOOZ ALLEN ACCELERATES AUTONOMOUS DRONE CAPABILITIES



**B**ooz Allen Hamilton announced that it has made a strategic investment in PDW, a Huntsville, Alabama-based company that designs and manufactures advanced unmanned aerial systems (UAS) for defense and public safety.

This investment reflects a strategic alignment between Booz Allen’s expertise in AI, autonomy and defense tech with PDW’s proven, domestically produced drone platforms to accelerate the delivery of mission-critical UAS capable of advanced surveillance, operating in contested environments, and strike missions.

This work aims to directly address the Pentagon’s focus on domestic drone manufacturing and its urgent call for reliable, autonomous drone capabilities at scale. As a domestic manufacturer, PDW designs, engineers, and produces systems at its 90,000-square-foot drone factory in Huntsville and is capable of producing 100,000 drones annually. “Drones are rapidly reshaping the speed, scale, and economics of modern warfare,” said Randy Yamada, vice president at Booz Allen. “Our investment in PDW reflects a shared focus

on accelerating the deployment of mission-ready, resilient, American-manufactured drone capabilities. By aligning advanced autonomy with domestic production, we are making the kinds of capabilities the Department of War needs to stay ahead a reality and directly supporting its Drone Dominance Program.”

“At PDW, we aren’t just creating new capabilities, we’re building the industrial capacity to deliver drones at meaningful scale,” said PDW CEO James Slider. “This means expanding American manufacturing capacity, scaling next-generation engineering teams, and anchoring our supply chain here at home to put the U.S. and its allies in a position of strength. This is the capability gap PDW was built to close and the mission we execute against every day.”

This investment enables Booz Allen to bring its autonomy and digital engineering expertise to bear, developing new solutions that reduce the burden on the operator. It represents a significant commitment to bolstering the U.S. domestic drone manufacturing industry while making a real

mission impact for the warfighter at the cost and scale the U.S. military needs.

“Booz Allen invests in companies that deliver mission impact at speed and scale,” said Bryce Pippert, executive vice president at Booz Allen. “PDW’s U.S.-made drone systems are a great fit for our portfolio and our Defense Tech teams who are advancing the next generation of autonomous capabilities.”

This strategic investment builds on Booz Allen’s high impact partnerships ecosystem to include Shield AI and Amazon Web Services, in addition to investments by Booz Allen Ventures into autonomy-focused startups like Firestorm, Scout AI, and Ulysses. These efforts reinforce a deliberate focus on scaling mission-ready technologies for today’s most critical missions. Together, these investments strengthen Booz Allen’s ability to deliver integrated, high-impact solutions that accelerate operational outcomes and address the most complex challenges facing U.S. government customers.

## PARAZERO SECURED AN ORDER VALUED AT OVER \$650,000 FROM A TIER-1 INTERNATIONAL DRONE INTERCEPTION COMPANY

**P**araZero Technologies Ltd. an aerospace defense company pioneering smart, autonomous solutions for the global manned and unmanned aerial systems (UAS) industry announced that it has signed a framework agreement with a Tier-1 international company who specializes in autonomous drone interception.

Under the agreement, ParaZero will conduct a full integration of its DefendAir Net Pod into the client’s new autonomous drone platform, ensuring seamless compatibility with the drone’s configuration. In addition to the integration, the client will purchase a minimum of 2,000 customized DefendAir Net Pod units.



This strategic framework agreement represents a significant milestone in the ongoing partnership between ParaZero and the Tier-1 company, as the two companies

underscore the growing demand for advanced, Counter-UAS systems. The integration is expected to enhance the client’s drone interception capabilities and support ParaZero Net Pod deployment worldwide.

“We are excited to deepen our collaboration with this particular tier-1 defense company through this comprehensive integration of our proven C-UAS, DefendAir Net Pod,” said Ariel Alon, CEO of ParaZero. “This agreement validates the value of our Net Pod technology and we believe that this positions ParaZero as an industry leader defining the category of non-explosive, net-based drone interception.”

## SHIELD AI DEEPENS INDIA PRESENCE WITH NEW DELHI OFFICE AND PLANNED BENGALURU EXPANSION



Shield AI announced the opening of an office in New Delhi to support its growing partnership and advance work with the Indian Ministry of Defence and its industry ecosystem. The latest milestone deepens the company's long-term commitment to India. The opening was announced during a high-level visit to New Delhi by the president and co-founder of the company, Ryan Tseng, and a member of the company's Defense Advisory Board, retired U.S. Navy Admiral John C. Aquilino, former U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) commander.

Shield AI has established a wholly owned subsidiary, Shield AI India, to support software integration, engineering, and autonomy development, and to grow indigenous engineering and software development capabilities for India. The entity will operate across two offices - the first one in New Delhi, which is operational now, and another in Bengaluru, which is scheduled to open later this summer, thereby enabling closer collaboration with local partners while contributing to the growth of India's high-technology ecosystem in AI and autonomous systems.

"India is central to Shield AI's global mission," said Ryan Tseng. "The depth of engineering talent here combined with our existing strategic partnerships and the trust placed in us by the Indian Armed Forces make India one of the most important partners in our long-term plans. Shield AI India is our commitment to building lasting capability in the country - not just selling to it."

"Being a strong partner means being present and working alongside our customers," said Sarjan Shah, managing director for India at Shield AI. "With our New Delhi office, and with our plans to expand soon in Bengaluru as well, we are strengthening our ability to support India's autonomy priorities and partner on systems that can be built, deployed, and sustained within the country, while growing a pipeline of Indian engineers and developers who can build and evolve mission autonomy on Indian terms."

"The U.S.-India relationship is something I was proud to support in my role as INDOPACOM commander, and given what Shield AI is doing in, with, and for India, I could not be prouder to support our partnership. Done right, the U.S.-India relationship can generate vital strategic, defense and economic value for both nations, and we look forward to supporting that overall goal," said Aquilino.

In November 2024, the company announced a strategic partnership with JSW Defence Pvt. Ltd. to indigenize and manufacture its V-BAT unmanned aircraft system. As part of a \$90 million investment, JSW Defence began construction of a large-scale V-BAT production facility at EMC Maheshwaram, Hyderabad in December 2025. The V-BAT production facility being set up by JSW is designed to serve the needs of the Indian Armed Forces and also function as a global production hub.

Shield AI's expanded India presence also supports its ongoing work with the Indian Armed Forces. Earlier this year, India selected Shield AI to provide Hivemind powered V-BATs and, in addition, licenses for Shield AI's Hivemind autonomy software for the Indian Army.

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 (JP-8) engine. Proven in the electronic warfare battlefield, V-BAT delivers intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) and targeting at significantly lower cost and logistical burden than larger drones. Under partnership with the Indian Army, Hivemind autonomy will integrate onto V-BAT as an autonomous pilot, enabling AI-powered perception, cognition, and beyond-visual-range operations. The company has also announced the development of a next-generation VTOL autonomous combat aircraft, X-BAT.

## ELBIT SYSTEMS EXPANDS EUROPEAN FOOTPRINT WITH NEW UAS FACILITY IN CHITILA, ROMANIA



Elbit Systems announced the inauguration of a new Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) facility in Chitila, Romania, marking another milestone in the company's ongoing expansion across Europe and its long standing partnership with Romania's defense industry.

The new site is the seventh production facility established by Elbit Systems in Romania, underscoring the company's long term commitment to local industrial cooperation, technological development, and the strengthening of European defense capabilities. Developed within the framework of the Watchkeeper?XR program, the facility establishes an integrated capability for the production, integration, testing, and maintenance of advanced UAS platforms in Romania.

The opening ceremony was attended by representatives of the Romanian government and armed forces, alongside senior executives from Elbit Systems.

At the beginning of his remarks, Yoram Shmueli, General Manager of Elbit Systems Aerospace, noted that the Watchkeeper?XR flew for the first time in Romanian skies earlier today. "The facility we inaugurate today is the seventh production site Elbit has established in Romania, a clear demonstration of our long-term commitment and confidence in the local ecosystem," he said. Referring to the live UAV demonstration held during the event, he added, "what we deliver is not just a platform, but capability: systems that are reliable, mission-ready, and prepared to operate where and when they are needed."

The Chitila facility supports the production of one of the most advanced UAS platforms in its class - integrating cutting edge technologies, operational experience, and lessons learned from recent conflicts around the world. These systems, built locally in Romania, will provide the Romanian Armed Forces with modern, operational proven capabilities and a strong technological advantage - while reinforcing national self sufficiency and sustainability.

Elbit Systems has been active in Romania for over three decades, employing more than 1,000 Romanian professionals across its facilities. Beyond defense manufacturing, the company's continued investment exemplifies its broader commitment to developing Made in Romania industrial capabilities - including technology transfer, production, and life cycle support.

# OVERLAND AI DEMOS AUTONOMOUS GROUND CAPABILITY FOR USMC ROGUE FIRES

Overland AI, the leader in ground-based autonomous capabilities, has successfully integrated the Overland AI OverDrive system onto the Marine Corps' Remotely Operated Ground Unit for Expeditionary (ROGUE) Fires platform for prototyping.

OverDrive, Overland AI's autonomy stack that is purpose-built for rugged terrain, and SPARK, the autonomy kit including sensors and compute, are intended to enable the ROGUE Fires to operate autonomously in expeditionary comms-denied and GPS-denied environments.

Overland AI has designed an off-road capability prototype to pilot land platforms with fully autonomous maneuver, including the ROGUE Fires platform for U.S. Marine Corps operations in complex and contested environments.

By integrating OverDrive into the ROGUE Fires prototype, Overland AI is demonstrating the ability to autonomously maneuver disaggregated fires assets across littoral environments, increasing mission effectiveness and lethality across expeditionary terrain.

At a recent demonstration, Overland AI's ROGUE Fires prototype operated without human intervention over mixed terrain for several hours. Additionally, Overland AI demonstrated operations between the ROGUE Fires and other platforms, including manned-unmanned teaming (MUM-T).



"Our work with the ROGUE Fires platform reinforces that Overland's autonomy is capable of expeditionary operations inside the weapons engagement zone," said Tim Francis, a director of business development at Overland AI. "This technology is built to handle the contested radio frequency and climate demands of littoral missions, and we are proud to support the Marine Corps."

Overland AI has upfitted the ROGUE Fires prototype with OverDrive, their autonomy stack, and with SPARK, their upfit kit including sensors and compute.

This work with the Marine Corps reflects Overland AI's growing operational record across

the U.S. military. Earlier this month, Overland AI completed a month-long deployment with the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, at the Joint Readiness Training Center, validating autonomous ground vehicle performance across logistics, reconnaissance, and counter-UAS missions under large-scale combat operations conditions. The ROGUE Fires effort extends Overland AI's work to the Marine Corps' expeditionary fires mission.

"Comms-denied and contested environments are not an edge case for the Marine Corps. OverDrive was built for those conditions," said Byron Boots, co-founder and chief executive officer of Overland AI.

## UAVOS SUPPLIES ADVANCED ROTOR BLADES TO US TEAMS COMPETING IN DARPA HEAVY LIFT CHALLENGE

UAVOS Inc, a developer and manufacturer of advanced unmanned systems and components announced it is supplying high-performance rotor blades to U.S. aerospace startups participating in the DARPA Heavy Lift Challenge. The competition calls on developers to design and build an unmanned helicopter capable of carrying four times its own weight, a breakthrough capability with no precedent in operational rotorcraft. In this effort, UAVOS is supporting participating startups as a technology and supply partner, providing rotor blades engineered to meet the demanding performance standards required for advanced heavy-lift unmanned rotorcraft.

UAVOS rotor blades are manufactured using an advanced construction approach based on the latest

carbon multi-cross-layer technology and core sintering, without additional mechanical processing. This design ensures excellent geometric stability, structural reliability, and consistent performance under challenging operating conditions.

The blades incorporate the NACA 23012 airfoil, selected by UAVOS engineers for its aerodynamic efficiency and enhanced performance under high-load conditions. Special attention has also been given to blade twist optimization, a critical factor in rotorcraft efficiency. Optimized twist geometry helps reduce power consumption and improve flight endurance, key advantages for heavy-lift unmanned helicopter platforms. Together, these features maximize aerodynamic efficiency

and extend operational flight performance.

UAVOS rotor blades have also been tested for overload resistance and environmental reliability by an independent European laboratory, further confirming their suitability for demanding unmanned rotorcraft applications. The blades offer a proven service life of 3,000 hours.

"We are proud to contribute to the DARPA Heavy Lift Challenge and to contribute to the development of next-generation unmanned aircraft," said Aliaksei Stratsilatou, Founder and CEO of UAVOS Inc. "By supporting U.S. aerospace innovators with reliable, high-performance rotor blade technology, UAVOS is helping push the boundaries of what unmanned rotorcraft can achieve."

## AIRBUS AND LAKOTA CONNECTOR PARTNERS SUCCESSFULLY EXECUTE 4RTH AUTONOMOUS FLIGHT TEST PERIOD



**A**irbus U.S. Space & Defense, in partnership with Shield AI, L3Harris Technologies and Parry Labs, completed its fourth autonomous flight test period on the H145 Airbus helicopter and successfully integrated all four company's technologies into a single aircraft together for the first time.

The test flights, which took place at the Airbus facility in Grand Prairie, Texas, focused on refining the aircraft's perception system to ensure it provides accurate, real-time information to an autonomous pilot ensuring obstacles are avoided within a landing zone.

"This test was vital for us to show the Lakota Connector's development in performing aerial logistics missions for the U.S. Marine Corps," said Rob Geckle, Chairman and CEO of Airbus U.S. Space and Defense. "Perception systems can make or break the success of an unmanned mission in the field, and I am excited to see our aircraft perform so well under uncertain conditions."

During the tests, each partner's contribution enabled the H145 aircraft to autonomously evaluate a landing zone, detect any obstacles obstructing it, and reroute to an alternate site as needed.

"L3Harris is delivering the digital backbone that advances autonomous aviation from concept to combat-ready capability," said Jason Lambert, President, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, L3Harris. "Our Modular Open System Architecture enabled this team to integrate four partner technologies seamlessly, demonstrating the speed and interoperability that will define the future of unmanned logistics for the Marine Corps."

Shield AI's Hivemind demonstrated its core capabilities and autonomous perception of the aircraft.

"This H145 flight test proves Hivemind delivers scalable autonomy across rotary and fixed-wing aircraft without custom redesign," said Christian Gutierrez, vice president of Hivemind Solutions at Shield AI. "That speed and flexibility are critical in contested logistics."

Parry Labs provided edge compute and autonomy-enabling software infrastructure supporting onboard perception processing and real-time decision-making.

"Autonomy only works when perception and mission software operate together at the edge," said Parry Labs CEO John "JD" Parkes. "This flight test showed how partner technologies can be rapidly integrated to deliver real-world operational capabilities."

Airbus U.S. is currently in the second year of the Aerial Logistics Connector Middle Tier of Acquisition (MTA) Rapid Prototyping Program, which aims to provide the service with aircraft prototypes to demonstrate capabilities to the warfighter through a series of operational demonstrations and experiments.

## HENSOLDT SUCCESSFULLY TRAINED DRONE PILOTS FOR THE MULTINATIONAL JOINT HEADQUARTERS ULM



**I**n addition to providing the technical skills required to operate commercially available drones, the training also included an aviation law examination in accordance with the civil and military regulations of EASA/LBA and the German Air Force (LufABw).

The sensor specialist and solutions provider HENSOLDT successfully completed the training of drone pilots for the Multinational Joint Headquarters Ulm (MN JHQ Ulm) this spring. With the project "Full training with aviation law examination for remote pilots in the civil category A2 and military regulations category II a", the HENSOLDT team has impressively demonstrated its particular capabilities as an "end-to-end service provider" for the training of military drone pilots.

The ability to conduct (tactical) operations using commercially available drones in accordance with the applicable civil and military legal frameworks of the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), the German Federal Aviation Authority (LBA) and the German Armed Forces Aviation Authority (LufABw) makes a significant contribution to strengthening the capabilities of our soldiers.

In designing the curriculum and delivering the training - in close consultation with those responsible at the MN JHQ Ulm - HENSOLDT placed particular emphasis on imparting as broad a foundation as possible, combined with mission-oriented skills. As a result, the drone pilots were comprehensively qualified and certified by the HENSOLDT team for their future tasks - authorised by the LufABw and the civil authorities EASA/LBA.

"Drones are increasingly becoming part of current and future crises and military conflict scenarios, both as means of reconnaissance, command and communication, and for combating. It is therefore essential for the operational readiness of our Bundeswehr in the context of national and alliance defence to impart the necessary capabilities. We are grateful that we can make valuable contributions to this effort as a 'one-stop-shop' by offering our expertise from a single source," says Thorsten Heil, Head of HENSOLDT's Flight Operations.

## PARAZERO SECURES A FOLLOW-ON ORDER FOR DEFENDAIR COUNTER-UAS, INCLUDING PERSONAL NET LAUNCHERS, NET PODS, AND TRAINING

## TYPHOON TEST FIRES GAME-CHANGING LOW-COST WEAPON TO COUNTER THREATS FROM UNCREWED AIR SYSTEMS

**ParaZero Secures a Follow-on Order for DefendAir Counter-UAS, Including Personal Net Launchers, Net Pods, and Training**

World of Innovation

DEFENDAIR | DROP AIR



**B**AE Systems has successfully completed test firing of a low-cost precision weapon launched from a Eurofighter Typhoon, demonstrating a highly effective, affordable solution to counter uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS). The APKWS® laser-guidance kit is a combat-proven, multi-mission solution manufactured by BAE Systems in the US. It is designed to counter a range of threats while enabling cost-effective operations and is already deployed with armed forces around the world.

The Company conducted the trial from its flight test development centre in Warton, Lancashire using a Royal Air Force (RAF) Typhoon test and evaluation aircraft to launch a successful strike on a ground-based target at a UK military testing range.

As the UK's sovereign provider of combat air capability, we play a crucial role in supporting the UK armed forces - working closely with the Ministry of Defence to develop technologies that strengthen our national defence capabilities.

This trial with the APKWS laser-guidance kit on Typhoon demonstrates a game-changing capability and a cost-effective solution that would enhance Typhoon's already impressive range of weapons capabilities. Richard Hamilton, Managing Director - Air Operations at BAE Systems' Air sector

This activity, supported by RAF, will provide valuable insights into how a low-cost precision weapon could be integrated in the aircraft, particularly counter UAS weapons, where affordable interception options are needed. It also forms part of a range of capability enhancements planned for Typhoon to increase the aircraft's potency in current and future combat air operations.

The Eurofighter Typhoon carries a wide range of advanced air-to-air and air-to-surface weapons, making it the combat aircraft of choice of air forces across Europe and the Middle East. This includes Meteor long range air to air missiles, Storm Shadow and Brimstone air to surface weapons for deep strike and precision attack roles.

The APKWS laser-guidance kit enables air-to-surface and air-to-air strikes. Air forces are successfully operating it in combat on the F-16, A-10 and several other fixed-wing platforms, as well as a number of rotary-wing platforms.

The recent trial on Typhoon paves the way for the next stage of tests on air-to-air targets.

**P**araZero Technologies Ltd. an aerospace defense company pioneering smart, autonomous solutions for the global manned and unmanned aerial systems (UAS) industry announced it has received a new purchase order from another defense entity for its advanced DefendAir Counter-Unmanned Aerial Systems (CUAS) solution.

This latest order is the second order from this particular defense entity followed by initial evaluation and training. The order affirms ParaZero's expanding footprint with strategic defense partners worldwide as it includes the delivery of DefendAir Personal Net Launchers, net pods, and a comprehensive training package featuring live exercises and simulation modules. These elements are designed to enable rapid operational deployment, maximize system readiness, and equip forces with layered, non-kinetic protection against hostile drones in urban and battlefield environments.

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.

The DefendAir supports multiple configurations - including handheld Personal Net Launchers for individual operators, stationary and vehicle-mounted launchers, and drone-integrated net pods - providing flexible, mission-ready defense for troops, convoys, critical infrastructure, and VIP protection.

## JOINT TASK FORCE COMMITS OVER \$600 MILLION TO PROCURE NEW COUNTER-UAS CAPABILITY

Joint Interagency Task Force 401 has committed over \$600 million at a record pace to strengthen counter-unmanned aircraft systems capabilities in support of Operation Epic Fury, the FIFA World Cup and homeland defense. This critical milestone demonstrates significant progress in counter-drone efforts and interagency collaboration.

In support of Operation Epic Fury, JIATF 401 committed \$350 million during the first month of combat operations to meet urgent requirements from U.S. Central Command, Air Combat Command, Air Force Global Strike Command and U.S. Army Transportation Command. These investments protect our warfighters and support the critical power projection platforms the joint force needs to maximize lethality on any battlefield.

"This decisive action demonstrates JIATF 401's ability to rapidly translate operational needs into fielded capability, while also remaining firmly focused on homeland defense," said Army Brig. Gen. Matt Ross, director of the task force. "From day one, our mission has been to move with speed and purpose to keep pace with this evolving threat."

JIATF 401 also committed \$100 million to enhance counter-UAS capability for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, focusing on mobile counter-drone technologies to protect stadiums and fan zones in 11 cities across nine states.

Working closely with interagency partners and law enforcement, the War Department is providing mobile counter-UAS solutions designed for sensing and non-kinetic mitigation as part of a layered defense. Under the



Army's Transformation in Contact initiative, Army National Guard units will employ these capabilities to protect people and infrastructure during FIFA events. After the World Cup, these systems will be incorporated into installation and critical infrastructure defense plans, giving installation commanders flexible, mobile assets that can be rapidly positioned against drone threats.

Additionally, JIATF 401 made a new commitment under the Domestic Shield initiative, allocating \$158 million to defend the nation's highest-priority defense critical infrastructure. The services provided input directly to JIATF 401 through an expedited site survey and requirements

process. The task force validated those requirements quickly, ensuring capabilities are tailored to mission needs and delivered as part of an integrated protection plan.

"The speed and scale of these commitments reflect extraordinary coordination across the Department of War and interagency partners. Efforts that traditionally take years have been executed in months, demonstrating JIATF 401's commitment to delivering operationally relevant capability at speed," said Michelle Self, deputy of the rapid acquisition division for the task force. "This coordinated, whole-of-government approach remains essential to defending the homeland and sustaining global operations."

## SAAB RECEIVES ORDER FOR COUNTER-UAS FROM SWEDEN

Saab has received an order from the Swedish Defence Materiel Administration (FMV) for a mobile and modular counter-unmanned aerial system (C-UAS). The system is designed to protect the Swedish Armed Forces as well as civil infrastructure from threats posed by drones. The order value is approximately SEK 2.6 billion and deliveries will take place 2027-2028.

In partnership with the Swedish Armed Forces and FMV, Saab is developing and deploying an advanced C-UAS system that offers proven, adaptable and cost-efficient layered defence against modern drone threats. The system will strengthen and complement Sweden's current air defence and drone defence posture.



"With today's order Sweden will acquire an advanced mobile, modular counter-unmanned aerial system. This technology enhances airspace security by detecting, tracking, and mitigating unmanned aerial threats, and can be easily integrated with other systems," says Carl-Johan Bergholm, head of Saab's business area Surveillance.

Saab's C-UAS is a modular, mobile platform designed to detect and neutralise low-flying small- to medium-sized drones. It integrates field-proven Saab sensors and effectors, as well as selected third-party technologies, into a single interoperable solution that seamlessly connects with existing defence assets. Built on established components, the system is fully operational and ready for deployment.

# DEFENCE STRENGTHENS UNITS WITH DRONE AND COUNTER-DRONE CAPABILITY

The Ministry of Defence is taking a major step forward in the further development of the Dutch armed forces by officially integrating drones and anti-drone capabilities into combat units. During Drone Day in Oirschot (NL), it became clear just how important Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) have become for modern military operations. This development is the result of intensive collaboration between the Ministry of Defence, research institutions and the Dutch drone industry.

Yesterday marked an important step in the continued development of the Dutch armed forces. During the Royal Netherlands Army's Drone Day in Oirschot, the first drone and counter-drone elements were formally integrated into combat units. This underscores Defence's recognition that operating with, and against, drones has now become a structural component of modern military operations.

This development does not stand alone. It is the result of close cooperation between Defence, research institutions and industry within a growing Dutch drone ecosystem. This national ecosystem for Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) must be capable of rapid innovation while ensuring the highest possible level of supply security.



NLR plays a proactive role in accelerating drone innovation. Tineke van der Veen, CEO of NLR, emphasises that NLR sees a clear role for itself in this: "We seek to build strong connections with government, industry and partner research institutions. We do this by proactively entering into partnerships through which we develop knowledge that supports Defence in carrying out successful missions. This also means we are prepared to take risks in order to learn from them quickly. In doing so, we strengthen our ability to translate promising concepts swiftly and effectively into the capabilities that are needed."

Innovations showcased during Drone Day also demonstrated how this

collaboration works in practice. A range of technologies and innovations was showcased, from radar-based drone detection and solutions for neutralising threats to navigation systems that operate independently of GPS. Current insights from international developments are being translated into practical solutions for the Netherlands.

The various demonstrations during Drone Day showed how individual innovations come together within a broader whole. In doing so, they contribute to the further development of an integrated and scalable UAS ecosystem for the Dutch armed forces.

NLR as strategic partner within the UAS ecosystem. As a strategic partner to Defence, NLR, together with other research organisations such as TNO plays a connecting role within the Dutch drone ecosystem. By combining objective and independent research with innovation, NLR accelerates the development of operationally deployable drones and drone functionality.

With deep understanding of operational needs, multidisciplinary expertise and access to leading research facilities, NLR contributes to a future-proof and technologically advanced Dutch Armed Forces.

## EOS COUNTER-DRONE CAPABILITY DEMONSTRATED IN US ARMY LIVE FIRE EXERCISE

EOS' counter-drone capability has been demonstrated during the US Army's Summit Strike live fire exercise, conducted by the 10th Mountain Division on 14 April. The combined arms exercise focused on planning and integration of emerging technologies in a contested, large-scale combat environment, bringing together multinational and industry participants to coordinate effects across multiple domains.

The demonstration featured the Sling Blade Counter Unmanned Aircraft System, which integrates EOS' Slinger counter-drone remote weapon system with a 30 mm cannon, a four-pack APKWS rocket launcher, and an SRC radar to form a closed-loop counter-drone capability.

Sling Blade formed part of a two-hour live fire activity that also included field artillery, Apache attack helicopters, electronic warfare assets and uncrewed ground vehicles, highlighting the role of counter-drone



capability within a broader system of systems environment.

EOS Defence Systems USA has been on contract with the US Army DEVCOM Armaments Center over the past year to support development of Sling Blade, including

integration of radar to enable firing solutions against drone threats.

Further trials with the 10th Mountain Division are planned, with additional operational assessments expected.

## DRONESHIELD AND OVERLAND AI ADVANCE AUTONOMOUS GROUND PROTECTION WITH INTEROPERABLE COUNTER-UAS CAPABILITY



**D**roneShield, a global leader in counter-drone technology solutions announced their collaboration with Overland AI to deliver interoperable counter-UAS capabilities between DroneShield's DroneSentry-X Mk2 and Overland AI's ULTRA unmanned ground vehicle, strengthening protection for next-generation ground operations.

Overland AI's autonomous platform is purpose-built for complex, off-road, and contested environments. Designed to operate where traditional vehicles and fixed infrastructure cannot, ULTRA extends operational reach while reducing personnel exposure and enabling persistent presence in austere terrain. Its rugged mobility and mission adaptability make it a force multiplier for reconnaissance, perimeter security, logistics support, and distributed maneuver.

As autonomous ground systems like ULTRA assume more operational responsibility, they also face evolving threats. Small drones are increasingly used for surveillance, targeting, and disruption, introducing aerial vulnerabilities to otherwise highly capable ground assets. Combining DroneShield's DroneSentry-X Mk2 onto ULTRA addresses that challenge directly.

DroneSentry-X Mk2 leverages DroneShield's RfAI engine to detect, identify, and track known and unknown drone threats in real-time. Unlike static detection systems, RfAI is continuously refined through software updates, ensuring the platform evolves alongside emerging drone threats. Regular quarterly enhancements extend operational relevance and help ensure deployed systems remain current against new signal profiles and tactics, protecting long-term mission effectiveness. Mounted onto ULTRA, the system extends airspace awareness to wherever the vehicle operates, ensuring that mobility is not achieved at the expense of aerial visibility.

This combination strengthens survivability and mission assurance. A ground platform designed to maneuver and operate independently is now equipped with persistent awareness of the aerial domain, enabling earlier detection of drone activity and providing operators with critical time to assess and respond.

"Overland AI has developed a highly capable autonomous ground platform designed for the realities of modern operations," said Tom Branstetter, DroneShield's Vice President of Business Development and Sales. "By integrating DroneSentry-X Mk2, we are ensuring those platforms operate with full-spectrum awareness across both ground and air domains."

The interoperable solution has been demonstrated in representative defense operating conditions, validating performance and interoperability in live operational environments.

"Autonomous ground systems deliver a decisive advantage when combined with modular payloads," said Byron Boots, co-founder and chief executive officer of Overland AI. "Integrating DroneShield's DroneSentry-X Mk2 onto ULTRA ensures our platform maintains awareness of aerial threats while preserving the mobility and autonomy ULTRA was built to deliver."

As defense and government organizations continue to adopt advanced ground systems, ensuring those assets are protected across domains will be critical. This interoperable solution reflects a broader shift toward integrated architectures designed to operate cohesively in dynamic threat environments.

The combined solution is available for defense and government customers.

## ECHODYNE PARTNERS WITH TRUST AUTOMATION ON USAF COUNTER-UAS CONTRACT

**E**chodyne announces its inclusion as a primary radar system within Trust Automation's Small-Unmanned Air Defense System (SUADS) Counter-UAS platform, to be delivered to the U.S. Air Force under a \$490M IDIQ contract announced in August 2025.

Rapidly Deployable Small-Unmanned Air Defense System (RD-SUADS), Fixed Site Small-Unmanned Air Defense System (FS-SUADS), and Expeditionary Small-Unmanned Air Defense System (EX-SUADS) platforms adhere to the Sensor Open Systems Architecture (SOSA) standard with EchoShield radars being the first fully integrated SOSA solution in the platform. The RD-SUADS platform is a self-contained, self-powered C-UAS system fitted to standard pallet sizes for easy transport via military aircraft, while the FS-SUADS is for deployment at permanent military installations and can be integrated as a group or standalone for diverse redundant base protection and 360-degree security. The EX-SUADS detection only system is designed for checked baggage transportation and sized to fit with cases in larger SUV vehicles.

EchoShield is the market-leading medium range radar that reliably and consistently generates precise location data for all drone types and configurations. A commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) radar system, EchoShield's industry standard interfaces and rich data options create a baseline data set that more accurately slews optical sensors, cues effector options, and accelerates reaction time. Boasting advanced classification capabilities built on recursive neural network (RvNN) machine learning models, EchoShield tracks all movement and pinpoints system and operator attention where and when it matters.



At the beginning of his remarks, Yoram Shmueli, General Manager of Elbit Systems Aerospace, noted that the Watchkeeper?XR flew for the first time in Romanian skies earlier today. "The facility we inaugurate today is the seventh production site Elbit has established in Romania, a clear demonstration of our long-term commitment and confidence in the local ecosystem," he said. Referring to the live UAV demonstration held during the event, he added, "what we deliver is not just a platform, but capability: systems that are reliable, mission-ready, and prepared to operate where and when they are needed."

The Chitila facility supports the production of one of the most advanced UAS platforms in its class - integrating cutting edge technologies, operational experience, and lessons learned from recent conflicts around the world. These systems, built locally in Romania, will provide the Romanian Armed Forces with modern, operational proven capabilities and a strong technological advantage - while reinforcing national self sufficiency and sustainability.

Elbit Systems has been active in Romania for over three decades, employing more than 1,000 Romanian professionals across its facilities. Beyond defense manufacturing, the company's continued investment exemplifies its broader commitment to developing Made in Romania industrial capabilities - including technology transfer, production, and life cycle support.

## LM INVESTS \$25M IN FORTEM TECHNOLOGIES TO MEET URGENT DEMAND FOR COUNTERING UAS THREATS

Lockheed Martin announced a \$25 million investment in Fortem Technologies, a global leader in airspace security. This investment, which represents the initial tranche of Fortem's Series B fundraising round, will enable Fortem to accelerate production at scale and enhance deployment within Lockheed Martin's Sanctum counter-UAS ecosystem.

Building on an established relationship, the investment advances a jointly developed, integrated approach to counter-UAS that is moving into broader operational deployment.

### WHY IT MATTERS

The rapid proliferation of small, cheap and easily acquired unmanned aerial systems has created a new, pervasive threat to military platforms, critical infrastructure and civilian airspace.

**Strategic Operational Advantage:** Modern battlefields are increasingly congested with hostile drones that can swarm, loiter or deliver precision payloads. By embedding Fortem's AI driven detection, tracking and neutralization technology within the Sanctum suite, the U.S. and allied partners gain an instantaneous "killchain" that can suppress drone swarms before they become a kinetic risk.

**Economic Efficiency & Cost Savings:** Traditional kinetic interceptors - missiles, rockets and directed energy weapons - are expensive per shot. Fortem's software centric, low cost sensor platform reduces the cost per engagement by more than 80% while delivering comparable effectiveness against low observable threats. Scaling production now will generate a sustainable, low maintenance logistics pipeline, delivering measurable savings and enabling more frequent training and readiness cycles.

**All Domain Interoperability:** The Fortem solution is open architecture and MOSA compliant, allowing seamless integration not only with Sanctum's airborne and ground-based nodes but also with allied air defense networks, joint force command and control systems, and emerging data links. This interoperability ensures allies can plug the technology into their own defense architectures without costly redesigns.

**Technology Leadership & Industrial Base Resilience:** The partnership accelerates the co-development of next generation AI, edge computing, and high-resolution radar capabilities. By investing in Fortem, Lockheed Martin safeguards a critical component of the national security industrial base, creates high skill jobs, and

positions the company at the forefront of the global UAS countermeasure market, projected to exceed \$12 billion by 2030. The investment will enable Fortem to at least double manufacturing capacity and create new jobs at its production facility in Lindon, Utah.

### EXPERT PERSPECTIVES

"This strategic collaboration will deliver robust mission capability aligned to our customer's demand for rapidly fieldable solutions that scale in volume and evolve as fast as the UAS threat. This is just the latest example of our commitment to investing ahead of need to deliver at the speed of relevance, and with affordability in mind," said Stephanie C. Hill, President, Lockheed Martin Rotary and Mission Systems.

"Low-cost, increasingly autonomous drone threats are scaling faster than traditional defenses were designed to handle," said Fortem Technologies CEO Jon Gruen. "Our work with Lockheed Martin reflects a shared recognition that counter-UAS capabilities need to be autonomous, integrated and deployable at scale. Together, we're taking technology that has already been proven in operational settings and accelerating its deployment to deliver a stronger, more responsive defense against evolving threats."

## HENSOLDT SUPPLIES HIGHLY MOBILE DRONE DEFENCE SYSTEMS TO THE GERMAN FEDERAL POLICE

As a reliable partner for pioneering multi-sensor multi-effector c-UAS systems, HENSOLDT is strengthening the drone defence capabilities of the German Federal Police.

Sensor specialist and solution provider HENSOLDT has been commissioned by the German Federal Police to supply detection and verification vehicles against unmanned aircraft systems (c-UAS vehicles).

The highly mobile and rapidly deployable c-UAS vehicles will significantly expand the German Federal Police's capabilities for the safe detection, verification and, if necessary, defence against drones that deliberately or negligently pose a threat to sensitive or critical infrastructure.

The self-sufficient vehicles can be deployed flexibly and quickly in a variety of scenarios, ensuring needs-based surveillance and the precise initiation of appropriate countermeasures.

The vehicles include an operator station as well as various mission-specific sensors and effectors that are either integrated into the vehicle or deployed separately from the vehicle to ensure maximum protection.



The ElySION Mission Core software developed by HENSOLDT, which has proven itself in numerous missions, is the heart of the overall system. It fuses all sensor data in real-time and provides a comprehensive situational picture enabling a quick and agile response to potential threats. ElySION also accesses data from other networked systems to secure the airspace via capable interfaces as required.

As the general contractor in this project, HENSOLDT's c-UAS team is responsible for integrating the IT, including the ElySION Mission Core software, and the sensors and effectors into the vehicles. The vehicles are being assembled by a specialised partner in accordance with the customer's specifications. This will significantly expand the German Federal Police's capabilities in the course of the year, increasing protection against threats from drones, for example at airports, in critical infrastructure areas or at major events. At the same time, HENSOLDT is underlining its ability to provide tailor-made c-UAS system solutions, also for highly mobile applications, and is making an important contribution to the sustainable enhancement of internal security.

## CSG INTRODUCES COUNTER-DRONE AMMUNITION ENABLING SOLDIERS TO NEUTRALIZE UAV THREATS WITH STANDARD RIFLES



**F**iocchi, part of the CSG, has introduced a new generation of counter-drone ammunition designed to enable soldiers to effectively engage small unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) using standard-issue firearms. The solution was recently unveiled at Enforce Tac 2026 in Nuremberg, one of Europe's leading exhibitions for internal and homeland security.

The new ammunition responds to the rapidly evolving threat posed by small commercial and improvised drones, which have become a defining feature of modern battlefields. While traditional air defence systems are often not suited to counter low-cost, low-altitude UAVs at close range, Fiocchi's solution provides a simple, immediately available last-line defence capability at the individual soldier level.

**Designed for standard assault rifles:** Unlike many existing approaches that rely on shotguns or specialized systems, Fiocchi's counter-drone ammunition is designed for use in standard assault rifles, including widely used NATO calibres such as 5.56x45 mm. This allows soldiers to respond to drone threats without the need for additional equipment or changes in training.

The round uses a multi-projectile concept, dispersing multiple tungsten pellets after leaving the barrel. This significantly increases the probability of hitting small, fast-moving UAVs while maintaining controlled effects to reduce the risk of collateral damage, particularly in complex or urban environments.

"The proliferation of small drones has fundamentally changed the battlefield. Armed forces are increasingly looking for simple, immediately available solutions that can be deployed at the level of individual soldiers. By enabling counter-drone capability directly through standard-issue rifles, we are helping address one of the most urgent operational gaps identified in recent conflicts," said Petr Marijczuk, CEO of the CSG Ammo+ division.

The ammunition is intended primarily for armed forces, including infantry and special forces, as well as security units operating in high-risk environments. Typical use cases include close-range protection of troops, patrols and convoys, as well as the defence of forward positions and critical infrastructure. This ammunition is designed also for law enforcement operating in urban environments.

**Tested with special forces:** The development of the new ammunition was carried out in close cooperation with the Italian Armed Forces, with testing conducted by their special forces units and Italian Army. The product has also undergone extensive validation in realistic operational scenarios, confirming its effectiveness against small UAV targets.

Following its introduction at Enforce Tac 2026, Fiocchi is engaging with international customers and preparing the product for market availability and industrial-scale production. The company is also working on expanding the concept to additional calibres, including 5.45x39 mm and 7.62x51 mm, in response to growing demand across different user groups. "This new product demonstrates how CSG companies translate battlefield experience into scalable industrial solutions. Leveraging our international production footprint, we are able to deliver reliable and cost-effective ammunition that can be rapidly integrated into existing force structures," added Petr Marijczuk. The introduction of the new product further strengthens Fiocchi's position within the defence segment and expands the CSG portfolio in the rapidly growing counter-UAS domain.

## ROHDE & SCHWARZ ROLLS OUT ITS FULL ARDRONIS COUNTER UAS SUITE IN A DEMONSTRATION VAN AT COUNTER UAS TECHNOLOGY EUROPE 2026



**R**ohde & Schwarz will bring its field-proven ARDRONIS counter-UAS suite to Counter UAS Technology Europe 2026, displayed inside a purpose-built demonstration van. Over the three day conference from April 20th to 22nd, 2026, visitors will be able to see firsthand how the fully integrated solution meets the early-warning and rapid-response requirements of armed forces, security organisations and the wider defence industry, all neatly housed inside a van.

Rohde & Schwarz' ARDRONIS suite improves the effectiveness and flexibility of its gapless jamming capabilities, extending its frequency range down to 100 MHz. It features a direction-finding cockpit that enables operators to monitor and control multiple stations simultaneously. This setup reduces the number of personnel required while supporting more efficient and coordinated operations.

The demonstration van features the complete ARDRONIS suite within a single, fully integrated environment. Guests are able to experience ARDRONIS Locate Advanced for detecting and locating drones and their operators. The van also includes ARDRONIS Effect, a multi band jammer with Smart Follower that automatically tracks and suppresses identified threats. Mobile ARDRONIS Detect and ARDRONIS Locate Compact units extend high performance detection and localization to rapid deployment and mobile scenarios, while the ARDRONIS Wi Fi modules adds the capability to identify and disrupt both commercial UAV communication links.

Rohde & Schwarz engineers will manage the unified cockpit, guiding attendees through the complete workflow – from initial detection and bearing acquisition to jamming and engagement – in a simulated environment.

On the third day of the event, at 15:15 GMT, Bob Moll, CUAS Market Development Manager, Rohde & Schwarz International GmbH, will present "ARDRONIS RF DF and Jamming - Staying Relevant in the (C)UAS Arms Race." In his presentation he will walk the audience through a concrete field deployment example that ties low frequency detection, multi direction localization and high power jamming into one seamless workflow, demonstrating how the ARDRONIS system can be deployed on a mobile platform and integrated into any defense or security architecture to meet today's evolving drone threats.

"Our ARDRONIS suite combines early warning detection, rapid response jamming and a unified cockpit into a field ready system," says Bob Moll, CUAS Market Development Manager, Rohde & Schwarz International GmbH. "Demonstrating it on a mobile platform illustrates how easily it can be woven into existing defense and security architectures to meet the fast changing drone threat landscape."

# X-BOW WINS \$12.2M CONTRACT FOR RAPID DELIVERY OF ADVANCED DRONE TECH



**X**-Bow Systems Inc (X-Bow), the leading non-traditional producer of advanced manufactured solid rocket motors (SRMs), sub-orbital launch solutions and defense technologies announced a \$12.2 million contract with AEVEX to produce rocket-assisted take-off (RATO) kits for AEVEX's Disruptor drone. X-Bow will deliver hundreds of production kits and thousands of SRMs and components between March and August 2026, demonstrating its ability to rapidly transition from contract award to fielded combat capability in just a few months.

X-Bow's RATO<sup>2</sup> (Rapidly Assembled Tactical Option for Rocket-Assisted Takeoff™) system, which include solid rocket motors and launch cradles, allows drones to take off from unprepared surfaces and confined spaces, significantly

expanding operational flexibility in modern conflict zones.

"Our ability to go from contract award to fielded combat capability in just a few months is exactly what today's rapidly evolving defense landscape demands," said Jason Hundley, Founder and CEO of X-Bow. "This contract validates our ability to build fast, field faster and deliver now to meet urgent defense needs."

Notably, this marks the first-ever high-volume use of X-Bow's patented Additive Manufactured Solid Propellant (AMSP) in solid rocket motors, showcasing X-Bow's proprietary technology leadership. This unique propellant formulation represents a significant advancement in SRM capabilities, offering potential improvements in performance and affordability for customers.

The global military drone market is projected to grow significantly, with increasing demand for systems capable of operating in diverse environments. X-Bow's RATO<sup>2</sup> technology addresses this need by enabling drones to operate from a wider range of locations and potentially extending their payload capacity and range.

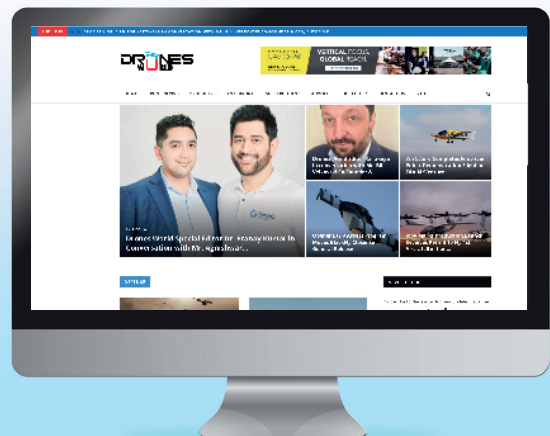
This latest contract caps a series of recent awards for X-Bow, totaling \$212 million in the past six months. Unlike traditional defense contractors, X-Bow's agile approach and proprietary manufacturing processes reduce time-to-market for critical defense technologies from years to months. This rapid turnaround from contract to delivery exemplifies X-Bow's unique ability to meet the pressing demands of today's dynamic global security environment.

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## US ARMY STRENGTHENS GRAY EAGLE WITH NEW ELINT UPGRADE



The U.S. Army is upgrading its MQ-1C Gray Eagle® Extended Range (ER) with enhanced electronic intelligence capabilities via a contract awarded to General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI). ELINT supports long-range sensing for the Integrated Air Defense System (IADS), providing critical information to ground commanders. This capability allows Gray Eagles to operate outside threat ranges while looking deeply into the battlespace and enables advanced manned-unmanned teaming to increase survivability for crewed Army aircraft.

“Combining long-range detection with the range and persistence of the Gray Eagle platforms ensures that commanders always know when an adversary IADS is operating,” said GA-ASI President David R. Alexander. “Gray Eagle’s open systems architecture makes this a simple but impactful upgrade.”

The ELINT sensor identifies and geo-locates critical threats vital to Joint Force Operations. To further enhance the Gray Eagle ERs electronic support capabilities, GA-ASI, along with Capability Program Executive Intelligence and Spectrum Warfare, will partner with SNC to integrate advanced radar detection and signal collection technology.

In addition to ELINT, the Gray Eagle ER has also been configured with modernized Communications Intelligence (COMINT), Synthetic Aperture Radar/Moving Target Indicator (SAR/MTI), and Mobile Ad Hoc Network (MANET) radios in multiple Army demonstrations, highlighting the platform’s C5ISR Modular Open Suite of Standards (CMOSS) architecture. The aircraft also supports the integration of best-of-breed sensors, payloads, and weapons to rapidly adapt to threats or specific missions.

Gray Eagle ER was featured in the U.S. Army’s Project Convergence Capstone-5 (PCC-5) last year. The multi-mission, multi-sensor Gray Eagle ER performed persistent Detect, Identify, Locate, and Report (DILR) missions in an electronically contested environment, simultaneously providing mesh network aerial tier support to maneuver units and connecting the soldiers and launched effects that might otherwise be obstructed by terrain or be out of range.

PCC-5 demonstrated Gray Eagle ER’s ability to transform contact, fight, and survive capabilities, automating operator input with easy-to-use human-machine interfaces. Resilient to jamming while integrating and cross-cuing ELINT, COMINT, SAR, and Aerial Tier Network Expansion (ATNE), Gray Eagle ER enhanced the survivability of the maneuver forces while supporting the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF).

## REDWIRE AWARDED \$20M IN FOLLOW-ON ORDERS TO DELIVER STALKER UAS ADVANCED NAVIGATION AND STANDARD SYSTEMS



Redwire Corporation a global leader in space and defense technology solutions announced it has received awards totaling over \$20M in Purchase Orders (POs) in Q1 FY2026 supporting the Navy and Marine Corps Small Tactical Unmanned Aircraft Systems Program Office (PMA263) Family of Small UAS (FoSUAS) Team.

This award encompasses the Marine Corps’ first acquisition of Redwire’s Advanced Navigation version of the Stalker Block 30 uncrewed aerial system (UAS). These new systems will provide a significant increase in capability and will join the nearly 250+ existing Stalker aircraft already fielded by the Marine Corps. Each Advanced Navigation system consists of air vehicles; ISR camera payloads; short, medium, and long-range ground control stations; and all associated support kits.

“Advanced Navigation is critical for long-range reconnaissance missions where drones must operate in contested, GPS-denied environments over vast distances,” said Steve Adlich, President of Redwire Defense Tech. “Our Stalker UAS has a 20-year legacy of combat-proven reliability, mission-driven performance, and adaptability. We are proud to support PMA263 as they modernize small UAS capabilities for the Marine Corps and strengthen readiness across key mission sets.”

The transition of the U.S. Marine Corps’ Stalker UAS fleet from the existing Stalker Block 30 to Advanced Navigation configurations ensures the Marine Corp stays on the cutting edge of technology to support its mission on quickly evolving modern battlefield. The Advance Navigation Stalker enables enhanced situational awareness, improved target tracking, and greater operational flexibility for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) missions, in highly contested electronic warfare (EW) environments, similar to that being experienced in Ukraine today.

This procurement was completed through the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Tailored Logistics Support (TLS) contract, an indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity (IDIQ) multiaward contract (MAC). Atlantic Diving Supply (ADS) served as the prime contractor for this award.

## CIRCUS AWARDED PUBLIC PROCUREMENT CONTRACT BY LITHUANIAN ARMED FORCES ON NATO EASTERN FLANK

Circus SE announces the successful win of the procurement tender for the deployment of the first fully autonomous AI-powered sustainment robot to the Lithuanian Armed Forces in Vilnius, Lithuania. Circus was selected as the winning bidder in a competitive public procurement process.

Under the contract, Circus AI robotic technology will be integrated into existing barracks infrastructure and evaluated within military operational and training environments following delivery. This will enable operational evaluation under real-world conditions,



including multinational exercises and sustained readiness scenarios.

Lithuania plays a key role in Europe's deterrence architecture, bordering Belarus and located near Kaliningrad. The Lithuanian Armed Forces operate

within a national defence structure of approximately 25,000 active personnel, complemented by a growing multinational NATO presence. Vilnius serves as a central military hub on NATO's eastern flank and represents a high-readiness operational setting within the Alliance's location network.

With this contract, Circus further expands its role in defence ground infrastructure through autonomous troop supply systems beyond contracts with the Ukrainian and German armed forces. The integration in Vilnius will already start this year.

## HII LAUNCHES HYPR PROGRAM WITH PATH ROBOTICS AND GRAYMATTER ROBOTICS TO ACCELERATE PRODUCTION AT SCALE

HII together with Path Robotics and GrayMatter Robotics, introduced the High-Yield Production Robotics (HYPR) program. The program seeks to leverage a network of emerging physical AI technologies from Path Robotics and GrayMatter Robotics to rapidly accelerate advanced, adaptive automation solutions in the fabrication process of both crewed and uncrewed naval platforms.

"Integrating our partnerships into one HYPR team will enable us to leverage each other's best-in-class capabilities to accelerate shipbuilding throughput, strengthen the maritime industrial base and augment our shipbuilding work," said Eric Chewning, executive vice president of maritime systems and corporate strategy at HII. "This HYPR initiative will allow us to apply next-generation robotics to complex, variable shipbuilding tasks that have been difficult to fully automate. We look forward to teaming physical AI technologies together to create fewer labor hours per hull, more predictable schedules, and a production model that can scale to meet the Navy's generational demand signal."

HYPR, developed with support from HII's Dark Sea Labs Advanced Technology Group, will combine robotic welding, automated material movement, autonomous surface treatment, and autonomous quality checks into an assembly line designed to produce increased speed and efficiency of ship and submarine construction. In 2026, HII plans to run proof-of-concept demonstrations with its partners. A full pilot program is expected to launch in 2027.

The program reflects a broader push within U.S. defense to expand naval capacity, modernize shipbuilding, and bring more scalable manufacturing methods into production to support building the



nation's golden fleet.

Production of critical material for integration into Navy platforms remains one of the main constraints in shipbuilding and submarine construction, and complex assemblies in particular require seamless coordination of many specialized skills and tasks to compress production cycle times. HYPR is designed for adaptive automation across the full structural process, from cutting and fitting parts to surface prep, welding, inspection, blasting and coating.

"Welding is one of the most complex processes to automate in any industry, and shipbuilding raises that

bar even higher," said Andy Lonsberry, Path Robotics CEO and co-founder. "Path Robotics' physical AI is engineered for exactly this challenge — moving, seeing, understanding and adapting to real-world conditions in real time to deliver precise, high-quality welds at scale. We look forward to working with the HYPR partners to put that capability where it matters most, accelerating production of the manned and unmanned vessels that protect our nation for whatever comes next."

Instead of adding standalone automation tools, HYPR combines multiple systems into a single coordinated production line.

## ARMY SELECTS AV'S VAPOR CLE FOR MEDIUM RANGE RECONNAISSANCE PROGRAM



**A**eroVironment, Inc. a global defense technology leader announced it was awarded a \$14.6 million production contract by the U.S. Army for the VAPOR® Compact Long Endurance (CLE) unmanned aircraft system (UAS), its all-electric vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) platform, under the Company-Level Directed Requirement (CoLvl DR) Small Uncrewed Aircraft System (SUAS), Tranche 2.

The award supports the Army's Medium Range Reconnaissance (MRR) initiative, one of the Army's ongoing unmanned systems procurements.

"Being selected for the Company-Level Directed Requirement validates VAPOR CLE's performance, adaptability, and mission value," said Jason Hendrix, Vice President and General Manager of SUAS at AV. "This award reflects AV's commitment to delivering operationally relevant, rapidly deployable solutions that meet the Army's urgent needs and evolving mission requirements."

The Army's CoLvl DR effort delivers commercially available SUAS capabilities to Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) to meet immediate operational needs, emphasizing UAS as a complete system. This approach enables modular, reconfigurable, and attributable payloads for reconnaissance, surveillance, and target acquisition, while enhancing adaptability, operational effectiveness, and soldier-driven experimentation to shape future requirements.

Engineered for demanding missions, the VAPOR CLE all-electric helicopter UAS sets a new standard for endurance, payload capacity, and field adaptability. Designed for operations across austere environments – from Arctic terrain to contested maritime conditions – the platform combines rugged reliability with a compact, deploy-anywhere design. Its modular open architecture and multi-sensor payload bay make it one of the most versatile small VTOL systems available.

Its folding airframe and compact pack-out system enable case-to-flight in as little as two minutes, delivering exceptional portability and speed to launch. Ruggedized for extreme weather and harsh sea states, VAPOR CLE can carry up to 24 pounds of payload or lethal munitions and deliver up to two hours of endurance, outperforming other all-electric quadcopters and competing helicopter UAS platforms in its class.

## SAIC AWARDED NEW \$75.2M PRISM TASK ORDER TO ADVANCE THE NAVAIR COMMAND'S MISSION-CRITICAL AVIATION SYSTEMS

**SAIC**

"For more than 20 years, we have worked hand in hand with the Navy to deliver mission-critical solutions that are grounded in science and engineering excellence and battlefield operational success."

**BARBARA SUPPLEE**

Executive Vice President, Army Navy Business Group



**S**cience Applications International Corp. (has been awarded a new \$75.2 million task order under the General Services Administration (GSA) Personnel and Readiness Infrastructure Support Management (PRISM) contract to provide critical support to the Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR). This contract expands on SAIC's two decades of trusted collaboration with the Navy to advance critical equipment and systems needed by our warfighters.

SAIC will leverage predictive analytics and digital engineering tools to improve reliability, reduce downtime, and enhance the operational lifespan of AAE systems, which is vital to supporting global naval contingency operations. SAIC will provide engineering and sustainment services for NAVAIR's SE, used to manage critical aviation systems and provide any troubleshooting support in real time. Additionally, SAIC will drive the development and integration of the Navy's ARS efforts for the MQ-25 Stingray – an unmanned platform designed to extend the operational range of carrier air wings.

"For more than 20 years, we have worked hand in hand with the Navy to deliver mission-critical solutions that are grounded in science and engineering excellence and battlefield operational success," said Barbara Supplee, SAIC Executive Vice President of the Army Navy Business Group. "This task order enables us to deliver best-in-class technologies that supports naval aviation at its core – AAE and SE sustainment – while driving revolutionary advancements for the MQ-25's refueling capabilities."

Supplee added, "Our teams don't just deliver; we innovate, transform, and ensure the Navy retains the operational edge required to win tomorrow's fight. This partnership, built on trust and proven performance, positions SAIC as the unparalleled choice for ensuring mission success across the Navy and the joint force."

The task order supports key NAVAIR program offices such as PMA-201, responsible for common AAE; PMA-260, overseeing SE sustainment; and PMA-268, advancing ARS for the MQ-25. Managed platforms include the F/A-18 Hornet, P-8A Poseidon, SH-60 Seahawk, and MQ-25 Stingray, among others.

SAIC was awarded this contract for the company's digital engineering tools, predictive analytics expertise, and proven relationship with the Navy. Over the past two decades, SAIC has delivered critical and innovative capabilities to sustain mission readiness and operational effectiveness for key Department of War customers. By prioritizing AAE and SE, while advancing the Navy's MQ-25 refueling program, SAIC remains a trusted partner for driving superior performance and outcomes in the dynamic defense environment.

## GA-ASI SELECTED BY US NAVY PMA-281 FOR COLLABORATIVE AUTONOMY MISSION PLANNING AND DEBRIEF PROJECT

General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI) was selected by the U.S. Navy's Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) PMA-281 for the Collaborative Autonomy Mission Planning and Debrief (CAMP) project. The initiative will advance mission planning capabilities, AI model management, and autonomy workflows for Autonomous Combat Platforms, culminating in a government sponsored demonstration targeting a 2026 Fleet exercise.

The project will demonstrate the potential for extending PMA-281's Mission Planning Software framework to support advanced autonomy operations, including behavioral tasking, Rules of Engagement (ROE) configuration, AI decision thresholds, and comprehensive mission debrief capabilities. The effort integrates with the Navy's Joint Digital Autonomy Range (JDAR) and Joint Simulation Environment (JSE) to enable rapid testing and validation of autonomy-enabled mission profiles.

"This project demonstrates our commitment to



delivering integrated mission planning and debrief solutions that enable effective human-autonomy teaming," said Mike Atwood, Vice President of Advanced Programs for GA-ASI. "By advancing collaborative autonomy workflows and leveraging government simulation environments, we're providing the Navy with critical capabilities to rapidly test, evaluate, and deploy autonomous systems for complex operational missions."

The CAMP project will demonstrate key capabilities on the MQ-20 Avenger® platform equipped with Government Reference Implementation (GRI) autonomy, Electronic Warfare (EW), and Infrared Search and Track (IRST) payloads. The initiative emphasizes robust communications architectures featuring Link 16, Tactical Targeting Network Technology (TTNT), and Starlink satellite

communications for resilient command and control.

In addition, this project advances operationally scalable autonomy by delivering enterprise mission planning, trusted AI governance, and accelerated digital validation to support Autonomous Combat Aircraft. By integrating secure AI model lifecycle management, human-centered oversight, and high-fidelity simulation environments, GA-ASI is enabling rapid capability iteration and seamless human-autonomy teaming.

The planned demonstration will showcase advanced mission planning and debrief capabilities for autonomy-enabled operations, integrated with Navy systems and evaluated in complex contested operational scenarios. The effort will highlight how mission planning software enables behavioral tasking, Electronic Warfare (EW) and Infrared Search and Track (IRST) employment, combat air patrol, and target engagement, with execution and coordination demonstrated via Link 16-enabled platforms including F/A-18 Super Hornets.

## HII ACCELERATES ROMULUS USV PROGRAM: 4 NEW ROMULUS VESSELS HEAD INTO PRODUCTION

Hill America's largest military shipbuilder and global leader in autonomous maritime systems, announced plans for the production of four ROMULUS 151 vessels to be built by Breaux Brothers Enterprises in Louisiana in addition to the ROMULUS 151 currently under construction.

The announcement signals a rapid shift toward initial production, as HII pushes to accelerate delivery of autonomous surface capability to the U.S. Navy and allied partners.

"ROMULUS represents a shift in how we deliver unmanned capability to the fleet," said Andy Green, executive vice president of HII and president of HII's Mission Technologies division. "We are combining shipbuilding experience, scalable manufacturing, proven autonomy, and strong industry partnerships to move quickly from prototype to operational deployment. The progress we are seeing today — including these initial production vessels — reinforces that we are on a disciplined path to deliver meaningful capability at speed and at scale."

Built for Scale and Mission Flexibility ROMULUS is a modular family of AI-enabled USVs designed to meet current and emerging requirements for the U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps,



joint forces, and allied partners. The platform supports a wide range of missions, including intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), mine countermeasures, strike operations, counter-unmanned systems, and the launch and recovery of unmanned underwater and aerial vehicles.

Engineered for serial, repeatable production, ROMULUS vessels combine endurance, global reach, and modular adaptability. The family is designed to scale across multiple vessel sizes

while maintaining a common manufacturing approach and autonomy baseline.

Advancing a Scalable Manufacturing Model The ROMULUS program is supported by HII's expanding unmanned vessel production ecosystem, including its assembly facility at Breaux Brothers Enterprises and the High-Yield Production Robotics (HYPR) initiative. Together, these efforts are designed to transition unmanned vessel production from prototype builds to high-rate, digitally enabled manufacturing.

In March, HII released a plan outlining an expanded ROMULUS assembly facility at Breaux Brothers and introduced HYPR as HII's initiative to apply industrial robotics and digital quality systems to unmanned platform manufacturing. By integrating automation, advanced tooling, and standardized workflows, HII aims to reduce unit costs, improve schedule predictability, and enable program-level delivery of unmanned systems aligned with evolving fleet needs.

"ROMULUS is engineered from the outset for scale," Green added. "By aligning design, autonomy, and manufacturing, we are creating a production model that delivers predictable outcomes and positions us to meet growing demand for autonomous maritime capability."

## KRATOS AND US ARMY INTEGRATE KRATOS J85 ENGINE INTO KRATOS FIREJET DRONE SYSTEM

Kratos Defense & Security Solutions, Inc. a leader in defense, national security and global markets announces that it has completed the initial flight series of the Kratos J85 engine version of the Firejet unmanned aerial system (UAS), dubbed MK1 Firejet. This second major configuration of the Firejet enables users/customers to select the model that best suits their operational requirements. With the new J85 engine configuration, the Firejet takes a major step forward in the aero-performance category for customers who need the extra performance.

Classic Firejet, the baseline Firejet target system, supports key missions for the U.S. Army at a high level of aerodynamic performance. Flying since the early 2010s with JetCat engines, Classic Firejet has evolved and been adapted to meet the customer performance and threat representation requirements over time. In addition to the U.S. Army operating the Classic Firejet, ally countries around the world operate the Classic Firejet, most recently including Taiwan, which has selected the Tactical Firejet named Mighty Hornet IV for their configuration.

With the new Kratos Spartan engine production facility established in late 2025, production is ramping up for the J85 and other Spartan engine models. Production rates are expected to be in the thousands by later this year and tens of thousands over the next few years meeting the demand for recapitalization which is becoming even more important this year with depletion of U.S. and ally inventories.



Steve Fendley, President of Kratos Unmanned Systems, said, "Kratos is committed to developing and providing threat-representative target aircraft systems and to offering survivable tactical UAS. With this new version of the Firejet in both target or tactical applications, we increase range, endurance, speed, and climb rate without penalizing survivability. Importantly, we also reduce supply chain risk by using an American-

made Kratos engine with engine components sourced in the U.S.A. With the two Firejet models, MK1 and Classic Firejet, we can now meet the cost-performance levels aligned with various customers' needs."

Eric DeMarco, President and CEO of Kratos, said, "With our rapid advancement and in production, military-grade jet engines, Kratos is making internal investments to answer the Department of War's call to industry to deliver affordable, high performance, military capability today. Kratos has invested significant internal resources and together with the Army, have integrated a leading technology engine with the Firejet jet drone system. In addition to the increased performance as a target, this engine configuration of Firejet is first-to-market as a CCA type, tactical jet UAS, in the high-performance, sub-\$500,000 arena; another example where affordability is a technology."

At the high-performance end of the low-cost or affordable jet aerial target market, Kratos' Firejet delivers unmatched fighter-like performance and versatility, representing the most lethal threats of the United States and its allies' potential adversaries. Kratos' Firejet provides the opportunity for customers to train their military personnel and to test multiple weapon systems with a single flexible and affordable high performance unmanned aerial target drone system. The Firejet supports both surface-to-air and air-to-air engagements with a combination of internal and external mission kits including tow targets, proximity scoring, passive & active RF augmentation, and infrared (IR) augmentation.

Additionally, the Tactical Firejet, a variant of the baseline Firejet developed in response to recent years' world events and configured to enable and perform key tactical drone operations, rather than use for target missions, maintains key Kratos platform features, including high subsonic speed, high-g maneuverability, optimized performance-per-cost class, and sensor/weapons capability.

## KOPIN AWARDED \$3.2M INITIAL CONTRACT FOR INNOVATIVE FIRST PERSON VIEWER OPTICAL MODULES, MARKING ENTRY INTO THE FPV DRONE MARKET

Kopin Corporation a leading provider of application-specific optical systems and high-performance microdisplays for defense, training, enterprise, industrial, consumer and medical products announced it has been awarded a \$3.2 million initial order for an innovative optical module supporting a key partner's next generation first person view (FPV) goggle system for drone pilots. The program includes the potential delivery of up to 40,000 goggles by the end of 2028. This award marks Kopin's formal entry into the rapidly expanding FPV drone market - a sector experiencing significant demand for advanced, ruggedized vision systems.

FPV goggles allow drone operators to see and guide a drone's flight path as if they were in the pilot's seat onboard the aircraft. Cameras and sensors mounted on the drone transmit real-time imagery to the goggles, enabling pilots to remotely control the drone from miles away.

At the center of this new order is Sentinel FPVTM, Kopin's newly launched FPV concept for drone pilots. Sentinel integrates high performance OLED microdisplays in a monocular or binocular configuration, delivering exceptional battlefield vision in a light weight, non-occlusive package for mission critical drone operations. Engineered specifically for tactical FPV goggle applications, the Sentinel module leverages Kopin's deep expertise in microdisplay integration, near eye precision optics, and ruggedized system design.

Breakthrough Dual Situational Awareness Technology Kopin's Sentinel FPVTM technology represents a major advancement in drone vision, designed for the military, not the hobbyist. Unlike traditional FPV goggles that fully block out the user's view, Sentinel is designed to deliver Dual Situational Awareness (Dual SA) - allowing operators in hostile environments to view high definition drone imagery while maintaining awareness and dexterity within their immediate surroundings. No other FPV goggle on the market provides this level of hands-free integrated awareness. Pilots who have tested Sentinel consistently highlight the dramatic improvements in survivability and mission effectiveness it brings. By reducing the need for pilot overwatch (where two warfighters are protecting each pilot), each team now gains a decisive advantage in hostile environments where the pilot can see their immediate surroundings while maintaining constant drone vision without taking off their goggle.

Early field trials have reaffirmed exceptional user comfort, system versatility, strong appreciation for the HD and daytime-readable module as well as clear demand for the Dual SA capability that only Sentinel FPVTM based goggles can offer. In field trials mission effectiveness was enhanced while pilot dexterity and safety were also improved dramatically.



Kopin Awarded \$3.2 Million Initial Contract for Innovative First Person Viewer Optical Modules, Marking Entry into the FPV Drone Market

## SIKORSKY AND ROBINSON UNMANNED SECURE USMC CONTRACT FOR AUTONOMOUS AERIAL LOGISTICS PROGRAM



The United States Marine Corps awarded a \$15.5 million contract to Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin company for the Medium Aerial Resupply Vehicle - Expeditionary Logistics (MARV-EL) Increment 2 program. The offering selected for award is the R66 TURBINETRUCK, an autonomous cargo helicopter commercially developed by Sikorsky and Robinson Unmanned that combines Sikorsky's proven MATRIX™ autonomy system with the rugged R66 airframe from Robinson Helicopter Company to provide flexible, affordable and rapid combat sustainment.

The ability to deliver ammunition, medical supplies and other essential equipment at the point of need - regardless of terrain, weather, or enemy threat - is critical to the U.S. Marine Corps' continued success. The MARV-EL program fills a capability gap between small tactical drones and large strategic airlifters, delivering a reliable "middleweight" uncrewed logistics platform capable of operating from austere forward operating bases, ship decks or unimproved landing zones. The R66 TURBINETRUCK will support mission success when ground or crewed aviation assets are unavailable and keep personnel out of danger in high-risk scenarios.

The R66 TURBINETRUCK is enabled by the MATRIX system and will leverage similar features as Sikorsky's new fully autonomous S-70UAS™ U-Hawk™ helicopter.

**Executive Perspectives :** "As we expand the MATRIX family, we also extend the reach of uncrewed solutions for both civil and military customers," said Rich Benton, vice president and general manager of Sikorsky. "The commercially developed R66 TURBINETRUCK is simple, economical and re-configurable; ideal for high-risk, hard-to-reach environments where keeping personnel out of harm's way is essential."

"Our partnership with Sikorsky brings the trusted performance and reliability of the R66 platform into the unmanned logistics arena," said David Smith, president and CEO of Robinson Helicopter Company. "The R66 TURBINETRUCK represents a significant step forward in expanding proven rotorcraft into scalable, autonomous cargo solutions for demanding operational environments. Together, we are delivering a game-changing capability that will enhance warfighter readiness and open new opportunities for safe, reliable and affordable autonomous transport."

"Operators need logistics solutions that can keep pace with rapidly changing mission demands without increasing complexity," said Paul Fermo, president of Robinson Unmanned. "By combining MATRIX's advanced autonomous capability with the rugged, flight-proven R66 airframe, the R66 TURBINETRUCK delivers that capability whenever and wherever it's needed—no matter the environment."

**Why It Matters :** The MARV-EL program is the middleweight capability responding to a gap within the Unmanned Logistics System - Air (ULS-A) program.

**Payload & Range:** MARV-EL requires an uncrewed aircraft that can carry a logistic payload between 1,300 and 2,500 lbs to a combat radius of 100 nautical miles (NM), operating through a common digital handheld device.

**Delivery:** Robinson Unmanned will deliver the first R66 TURBINETRUCK to Sikorsky for integration, test and evaluation, and demonstration. Capability demonstrations will showcase MATRIX's platform-agnostic and open architecture design operating on the R66 TURBINETRUCK airframe.

**Integration:** MATRIX will integrate into the R66 TURBINETRUCK in a similar manner as Sikorsky's S-70UAS U-Hawk helicopter, while incorporating a smaller footprint, different performance parameters and a lower operating cost.

## TELEDYNE FLIR DEFENSE GROWS THIRD-PARTY PAYLOAD INTEGRATION PROGRAM, ADDS EMESENT HOVERMAP LIDAR FOR UNMANNED AIR, GROUND, AND DETECTION PLATFORMS



Teledyne FLIR Defense announced the expansion of its Third-Party Payload Integration Program with the certification of Emesent's Hovermap LIDAR Payload. The agreement will deliver Emesent's GPS-denied 3D-mapping capabilities across Teledyne FLIR's unmanned aerial systems (UAS), ground robots, and radiation detection platforms.

The Emesent-Teledyne FLIR combination addresses a GPS-denial gap in air and ground domains where unmanned systems can lose GPS connectivity in common operating areas, such as tunnels, urban structures, and CBRN-contaminated spaces. Using LIDAR-based Simultaneous Localization and Mapping (SLAM), Emesent's Hovermap payload generates accurate 3D maps without GPS or external infrastructure.

On Teledyne FLIR's SkyRanger® R70 and R80D SkyRaider® UAS platforms, Hovermap enables mapping even in GPS-denied environments. Mounted on the company's SUGV™ 325 ground robot, Hovermap provides users with persistent 3D awareness of complex enclosed environments streamed in real-time. And integrated with Teledyne FLIR's MUVE™ R430 radiation detection payload on the SUGV, Hovermap allows operators to see not just where a robot has been, but where radiation levels are elevated, giving CBRN teams an immediate, geo-referenced picture of the threat environment.

"Knowing the shape of a space is powerful. Knowing where the radiation is within that space, in real time, without putting a person in harm's way, is an operational game-changer," said Stefan Hrabar, co-founder and chief strategy officer at Emesent. "Our partnership with Teledyne FLIR Defense brings together GPS-denied mapping and radiation detection in a way that directly addresses what CBRN operators need in the field."

"Teledyne FLIR builds platforms trusted for the most demanding CBRN missions in the world," said Tung Ng, vice president of Unmanned Systems North America for Teledyne FLIR Defense. "Working with Emesent, we'll be able to give operators a fused, spatial picture of the threat environment they simply haven't had access to before."

"This is the direction the whole field is heading in, and we're delivering it now through certified third-party payloads like Hovermap," Ng added.

Emesent's Hovermap represents the firm's success in utilizing Teledyne FLIR Defense's open-architecture, partner-enabled development ecosystem. Certified payloads are assessed for mechanical fit, electrical interface, software compatibility, and flight performance, giving customers confidence in mission-tailored capabilities from a growing partner ecosystem.

The partnership also establishes a technical foundation for future capability development. Both companies are actively developing autonomous navigation capabilities and expanding multi-sensor fusion beyond radiation to additional CBRN detection modalities.

## FORTERRA STRENGTHENS BATTLEFIELD AUTONOMY PORTFOLIO WITH NEW MESA VEHICLE, EXTENDING MISSION CAPABILITY TO THE LAST TACTICAL MILE

Forterra, the leader in autonomous mission systems announced the unveiling of the MESA: a modular, mission-ready autonomous vehicle platform designed to extend operational capability to the last tactical mile. Built on a factory modified Polaris Ranger XD 1500 platform, the MESA integrates Forterra's AutoDrive® and Vektor mission modules into a scalable system that delivers mobility, compute, communications and sensing at the edge and Polaris' robust vehicle platform.

The MESA reinforces Forterra's approach to autonomy: delivering mission-ready systems that are interoperable and proven in real-world operations such as USMC ROGUE Fires program, in addition to various SOCOM initiatives. By combining field proven autonomy with secure, software defined communication capabilities, the MESA enables forces to deploy coordinated, adaptive impact across a wide range of missions without increasing additional risk to the warfighter.

"Our MESA vehicle brings together the core elements of autonomous mission execution and OEM manufacturing into a single, deployable platform," said Pat Acox, Vice



President of Defense Growth at Forterra. "Because MESA is built in direct partnership with Polaris, every vehicle comes off the same market-leading production line that delivers Polaris platforms globally, with all modifications executed alongside the OEM. This results in a more robust, fully integrated platform without aftermarket changes to the base vehicle chassis."

The MESA platform features a flat deck design with L-Track mounting and provides up to 2,000 pounds of payload capacity, enabling rapid reconfiguration for mission-specific needs. Powered by AutoDrive®, the MESA delivers reliable autonomous navigation in complex, GPS-denied environments while Vektor delivers secure,

resilient connectivity across distributed forces.

"Forterra's engineering team demonstrated a deep understanding of what it takes to field autonomous systems in real-world defense environments, and what they required of the base vehicle platform," said John LaFata, engineering manager, Polaris Government and Defense. "The Ranger XD 1500 off-road vehicle was selected with operational performance, reliability and scalability in mind. The RANGER XD 1500 was designed to handle heavy loads and extreme terrain, and Forterra has maximized both with MESA, unlocking a new capability on top of that proven vehicle. The result is a platform we're confident in, and we're proud to support a solution that has the potential to fundamentally change how ground forces operate."

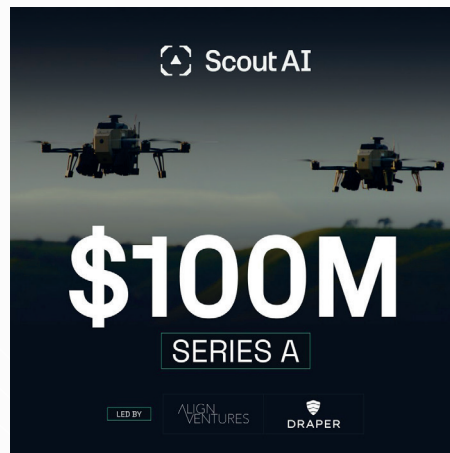
Designed for flexibility, the MESA supports a wide range of operational roles, including logistics, force protection and mission-specific payload integration. Its open, modular architecture empowers seamless interoperability with existing platforms, sensors and command systems that accelerate deployment across current and future programs.

## SCOUT AI RAISES \$100M SERIES A TO BUILD THE AI BRAIN FOR UNMANNED WARFARE

Scout AI Inc. announced an oversubscribed \$100 million Series A financing to accelerate development of Fury, its foundation model for unmanned warfare. The round was co-led by Align Ventures and Draper Associates.

"This historic raise is a signal to every patriot in Silicon Valley," said Colby Adcock, CEO and Co-Founder of Scout AI. "The most important frontier in AI is the physical world, and it should be pursued in service to the men and women who defend this country. Some AI companies are stepping back from defense. We're stepping up, and we're bringing on the best engineers in the world for the mission. Come build Fury and ensure American dominance in the age of robots."

Scout AI is the premier frontier AI lab for war, distinct from defense primes and defense-tech neoprimes focused on manufacturing and integration. Its singular focus is the AI brain for unmanned warfare, translating commander intent into coordinated autonomous action across large, mixed fleets. Fury is built for the tactical edge, enabling layered orchestration from command and control to



unmanned systems across air, land, sea, and space.

"Scout AI is exactly the company this moment demands," said Tyrone Lee, Partner at Draper Associates. "As uncrewed systems reshape the battlefield, advantage will go to whoever can orchestrate and command them most effectively."

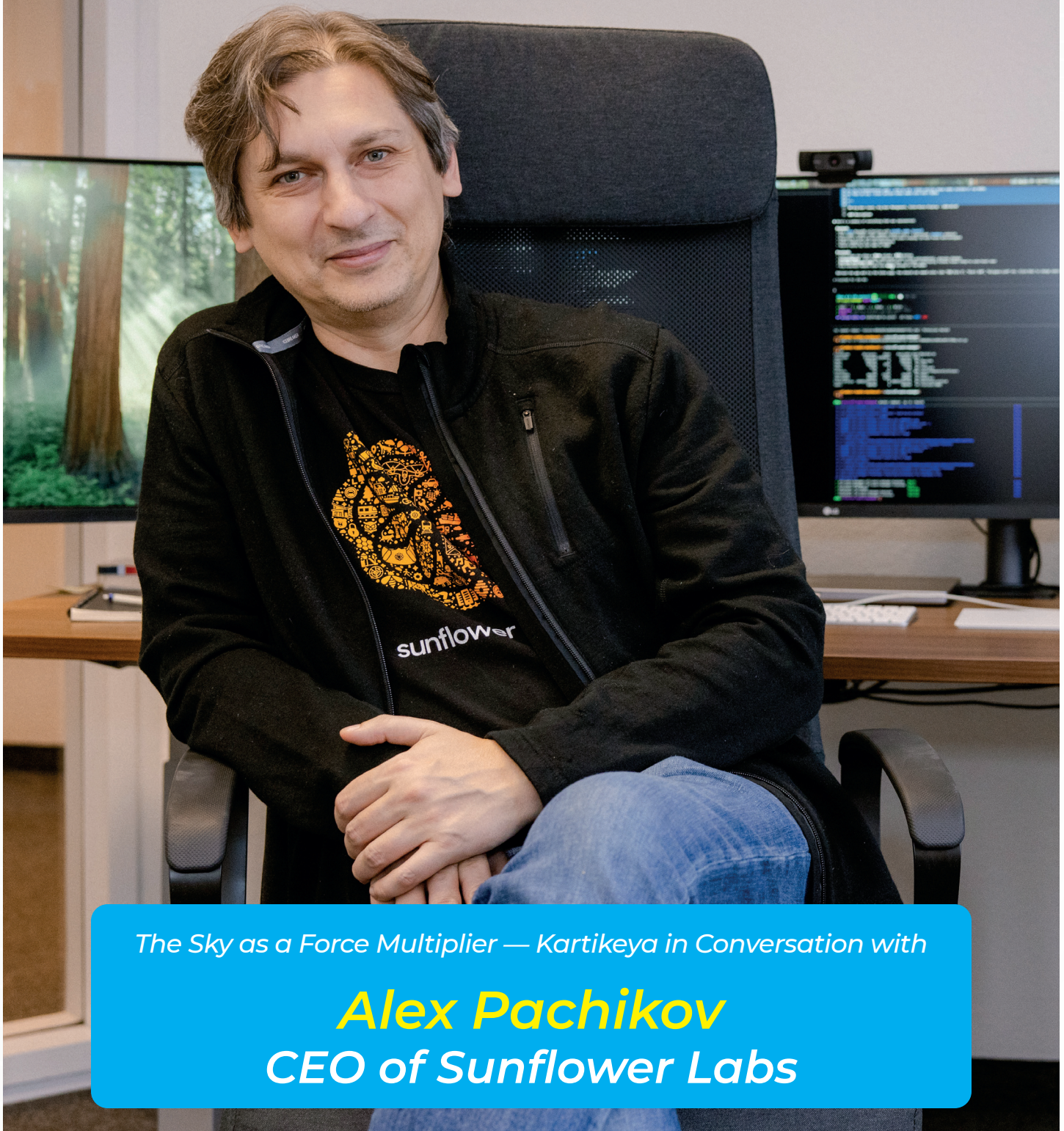
Scout AI has made significant progress since its founding 18 months ago. In its first year, the company

booked \$11 million in contracts with the Department of War, unveiled Ox, its C2-based autonomous vehicle orchestrator, and publicly demonstrated a fully autonomous, end-to-end strike mission executed by AI agents. It has also assembled a 34-person powerhouse team, with deep experience across AI, robotics, and national security.

Collin Otis, CTO and Co-Founder of Scout AI added, "The U.S. military has been promised true, one-to-many autonomy for years. Fury finally delivers it. We're deploying this \$100 million to massively scale our foundational military AI and multi-agent collaboration to extend Fury's lead as the most capable AI foundation model for war. That compounding advantage is what makes this moment so important and why we're moving as fast as we are. Our adversaries are sprinting and we must outpace them."

The historic round also saw participation from Decisive Point, Booz Allen Ventures, BVVC, Neman Ventures, Evolution VC Partners, Heraclitus Capital Management, Sigmas Group, Disruptive Founders Fund, and Vaughn Capital Partners.

# The Sky as a Force Multiplier



*The Sky as a Force Multiplier — Kartikeya in Conversation with*

**Alex Pachikov**  
**CEO of Sunflower Labs**



**Q** Your platform now enables a single operator to supervise multiple autonomous systems. How does this shift the economics of security operations for large-scale deployments?

**A** It's an order-of-magnitude shift. When one pilot can supervise six concurrent drones covering 18+ sites, the per-site cost of autonomous patrol drops by 20x. The savings are the headline, but the real gains are in coverage and response time. A drone gets to a perimeter alert in seconds. A guard in a vehicle takes significantly longer.

**Q** You're moving beyond traditional monitoring toward real-time intelligence. What kinds of decisions can your system now make autonomously without human intervention?

**A** The system identifies the parts of a site that matter most: key security locations, movement corridors, ingress and egress points. It tracks activity in those zones and starts to assess intent and behaviour. So instead of just sending an alert when someone enters a frame, it can tell the operator that a person is loitering near a back gate, or moving in a pattern that doesn't match normal site traffic. The operator still makes the call on what to do. The system does the filtering.

**Q** With advanced capabilities like thermal sensing and anomaly detection, how do you ensure accuracy while minimizing false alarms in complex environments?

“The system is the force multiplier. The judgment stays with the person.”

**A** Two things. First, training and continuous feedback. AI isn't perfect, but it lets us pre-filter detections far better than any motion sensor or fixed camera setup. Second, operator input. Every confirmed false positive feeds back into the model, so the system gets sharper at each individual site over time. The combination is what lets us run at high recall without flooding operators with noise.

**Q** Autonomous aerial response is becoming a key feature of your platform. How important is speed and mobility in redefining perimeter security?

**A** It's paramount, especially for large outdoor sites. A fixed camera tells you something happened. A drone tells you



what is happening, right now, with a clear visual from any angle. That's the difference between an alert and a real-time security assessment. For sites measured in acres or square miles, aerial response is the only practical way to get eyes on a situation in seconds rather than minutes.

**Q** As you expand into new international markets, what challenges do you face in adapting autonomous security systems across different regulatory and operational environments?

**A** Every country has its own process, its own regulator, and its own definition of what's allowed. There is no shortcut. It takes time to understand the local framework, build relationships with the regulators, and earn the trust that lets you operate at scale. We're now in nine countries, and each one has been its own multi-year effort.

**Q** Your approach reduces reliance on human guards. How do you see the role of human operators evolving alongside autonomous systems?

**A** I'd actually frame it the opposite way. Our system makes human operators more effective. It gives them the ability to be in many places at once and to get a birds-eye view of any situation on demand. But at the end of the day, a human still decides whether a crime occurred and what the response should be. The system is the force multiplier. The judgment stays with the person.

**Q** With increasing adoption and system capabilities, what does a fully scaled deployment look like for Sunflower Labs in the next few years?

**A** Hundreds of thousands of sites, with our system integrated alongside other security measures rather than replacing them. The vision isn't drones doing everything. It's drones as the aerial layer of a complete security stack: cameras, access control, alarms, and now autonomous aerial response, all coordinated through one operator workflow. That's where this is going.

## BELL SELECTED BY NEAR EARTH AUTONOMY TO PROVIDE BELL 505 AIRFRAME FOR USMC MARV-EL PROGRAM



**B**ell Textron Inc announced that it was selected by Near Earth Autonomy (Near Earth) as a partner on the prototyping of an autonomous Bell 505 for the U.S. Marine Corps' Aerial Resupply Vehicle - Expeditionary Logistics (MARV-EL) Increment 2 program. The goal of the program is to prototype an uncrewed logistics aircraft ready for tactical-edge resupply in contested environments and serve as a middle-weight uncrewed logistics asset.

"This platform will be a step forward in transforming the U.S. Marine Corps' autonomous operations and how our warfighters navigate on the battlefield," said Jason Hurst, Bell SVP, Engineering. "We're leveraging our decades of experience with the U.S. Armed Forces and innovative product development applying it to the versatile Bell 505 for this program."

The awarded contract will deliver an autonomous aerial logistics capability that exceeds MARV-EL performance threshold requirements and accommodates a wide range of payloads and standard containers. Bell will provide engineering support to the Near Earth team on modifications to the Bell 505 for autonomy integration and enhanced cargo handling.

"Bell looks forward to continuing to build upon our relationship and prior autonomy development with Near Earth in support of the MARV-EL program," added Hurst.

In 2024, Bell revealed its Aircraft Laboratory for Future Autonomy (ALFA) platform - a step forward in its autonomous flight efforts. Bell and Near Earth collaborated to integrate an advanced perception system for flight demonstrations on the ALFA aircraft, working towards fully autonomous flight capability.

## RHEINMETALL TO SUPPLY THE BUNDESWEHR WITH FV-014 LOITERING MUNITION

**R**heinmetall has received a major order from the Bundeswehr for FV-014 loitering munition systems. A contract to that effect was signed in Koblenz. Deliveries are scheduled to begin in the first half of 2027, following qualification from the second quarter of 2026. The framework contract is worth billions, with the first call-off amounting to approximately €300m gross. The order will be booked in April 2026. The framework agreement optionally includes a five-figure number of FV-014 autonomous recon and strike drones.



"Within a very short time, Rheinmetall has developed an autonomous drone that combines reconnaissance and strike capabilities. The FV-014 will enable the Bundeswehr to protect its own forces and engage critical targets in a fast, controlled and effective manner. We are grateful for the trust placed in us and will begin producing the system in large quantities on an industrial scale very soon," said Armin Papperger, CEO of Rheinmetall AG.

The FV-014 loitering munition system has a range of up to 100 km and is equipped with a 4 kg warhead and detonator mechanism. The drone can remain airborne for up to 70 minutes, monitoring targets until engaging on them. The system combines intelligence and firepower and is manufactured entirely within the EU.

## RED CAT TO DELIVER 173 BLACK WIDOW DRONE SYSTEMS UNDER JAPAN MOD CONTRACT



**R**ed Cat Holdings, Inc a U.S.-based provider of advanced all-domain drone and robotic solutions for defense and national security disclosed new details on a previously announced recent Asia-Pacific contract award for its Black Widow systems. The award was the result of a competitive acquisition for 173 sUAS systems led by the Acquisition, Technology & Logistics Agency (ATLA), an external bureau of Japan's Ministry of Defense responsible for research and development, procurement, and project management of defense equipment. The end-user is the Japanese Army (JGSDF).

The 173 systems are being delivered under Japan Fiscal Year 2026 (JFY26) funding. Red Cat is fulfilling the order in close coordination with Japanese partners HAMA K.K. and ITOCHU Aviation Co., Ltd., and with U.S. partner ITOCHU Aviation, Inc. In addition to a previous order from the Australian Army, this is the second Asia-Pacific Ally to order Black Widow systems for military use.

Each system includes two Black Widow aircraft, one WEB ground control station, and other mission-critical components. In-country training and light maintenance support will be conducted by HAMA personnel, trained directly by Red Cat.

"As we move into delivery, our focus is on ensuring Japan's forces have immediate access to reliable, mission-ready ISR capabilities at the tactical edge," said Jeff Thompson, CEO of Red Cat. "Japan is taking a disciplined approach to integrating advanced technologies that enhance readiness and support evolving mission requirements. We're proud to support that modernization with a system designed for real-world use."

A concurrent contract will cover spare parts and training to ensure long-term readiness. Over time, Red Cat expects to deepen local industrial involvement through a licensed manufacturing agreement and expanded in-country maintenance capabilities.

The Black Widow™ is Red Cat's flagship small unmanned aircraft system (sUAS), engineered for tactical edge ISR missions with a compact, rugged design and secure communications architecture. Built in the U.S. and compliant with the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), the platform is a key part of Red Cat's Family of Systems, offering modular, scalable solutions across multiple operational domains.



the technology event for

# AUTONOMY

XPONENTIAL

May 11 - 14, 2026  
Detroit, MI

## XPONENTIAL 2026: DETROIT POSITIONS ITSELF AT THE CENTER OF THE GLOBAL AUTONOMY REVOLUTION

The global autonomy industry is entering a decisive new phase. Across defence, aerospace, logistics, infrastructure, and public safety, autonomous technologies are rapidly transitioning from experimental platforms into operational systems deployed at scale. Against this backdrop, XPONENTIAL 2026 is expected to emerge as one of the most strategically important gatherings for the global unmanned systems and robotics industry.

Scheduled to take place in Detroit, Michigan, XPONENTIAL 2026 will bring together aerospace leaders, defence organisations, robotics innovators, AI developers, regulators, investors, and autonomous systems manufacturers from around the world. Organised by AUVSI in partnership with Messe Düsseldorf North America, the event is expected to showcase the technologies, policy frameworks, and operational concepts shaping the future of autonomy across air, land, and maritime domains.

What distinguishes this edition of XPONENTIAL is the industry's broader shift from technology demonstration

toward scalable deployment. The conversation is no longer centred solely around proving whether autonomous systems can work, but rather how governments and industries can deploy them efficiently, securely, and at operational scale. This transition is expected to dominate discussions throughout the conference.

Detroit itself represents a symbolic and strategic host city. Historically recognised as a global manufacturing powerhouse, the city is increasingly positioning itself within advanced mobility, robotics, defence production, and autonomous technology ecosystems. Organisers are expected to emphasise this industrial transformation throughout the event, linking Detroit's manufacturing heritage with the future of intelligent autonomous systems.

The exhibition floor is expected to feature one of the largest concentrations of autonomous system technologies globally. Companies spanning drone manufacturing, AI software, counter-UAS systems, autonomous mobility, advanced sensors, robotics, navigation technologies, and defence systems are anticipated to showcase next-

generation capabilities designed for both military and commercial applications.

A major focus throughout the event is expected to be the rapid evolution of defence autonomy. Governments worldwide are accelerating investments into AI-enabled ISR platforms, collaborative combat drones, autonomous logistics, and resilient navigation technologies. As geopolitical tensions continue driving military modernisation programs globally, XPONENTIAL 2026 is likely to become an important platform for defence-industry collaboration and strategic technology partnerships.

Counter-drone systems are also expected to occupy a significant presence across the exhibition and conference agenda. The proliferation of low-cost aerial threats and increasingly sophisticated drone operations has accelerated demand for layered counter-UAS architectures capable of detection, identification, tracking, electronic warfare, and autonomous interception.

Several leading companies within the counter-drone ecosystem are expected to showcase advanced integrated



solutions combining radar, artificial intelligence, electro-optical systems, RF detection, and autonomous interception technologies. Industry attention will likely focus on how these systems are evolving from fixed-site protection into highly mobile and deployable operational solutions capable of supporting military, homeland security, and critical infrastructure missions.

Artificial intelligence will remain another dominant theme across XPONENTIAL 2026. AI-powered mission autonomy, collaborative swarming technologies, predictive analytics, intelligent navigation systems, and machine-learning-enabled ISR capabilities are rapidly redefining operational concepts across the unmanned systems industry.

The integration of AI into autonomous platforms is no longer viewed as an experimental enhancement, but increasingly as a mission-critical capability. Industry leaders are expected to discuss how AI can improve operational efficiency, reduce operator workload, accelerate decision-making, and enable higher levels of autonomy in contested environments.

Urban air mobility and advanced air mobility technologies are also expected to receive significant attention throughout the event. While the commercial eVTOL sector continues navigating certification and infrastructure challenges, momentum surrounding autonomous urban transportation ecosystems remains strong.

Conference discussions are expected to examine vertiport infrastructure development, autonomous airspace integration, battery technologies, digital traffic management systems, and regulatory frameworks required to support future urban air mobility operations. Several companies are likely to showcase technologies supporting next-generation aerial transportation networks and smart-city integration concepts.

Another defining aspect of XPONENTIAL 2026 will be its strong emphasis on policy, regulation, and industrial resilience. Regulatory authorities, including senior aviation and government officials, are expected to address the evolving frameworks required for integrating autonomous systems safely into national airspace and operational environments.

Beyond regulation, supply-chain resilience is emerging as a major strategic concern for the global autonomy industry. Semiconductor access, secure manufacturing ecosystems, trusted component sourcing, cybersecurity, and technological sovereignty are becoming increasingly critical topics amid growing geopolitical competition.

Industry leaders are also expected to address workforce development and talent-generation challenges. As autonomous technologies continue expanding across sectors, demand for highly skilled engineers, AI specialists, robotics experts, and autonomous systems operators is increasing rapidly. Educational institutions, training

organisations, and industry stakeholders are expected to discuss how to build sustainable talent pipelines capable of supporting long-term industry growth.

Networking and strategic collaboration are expected to remain central to the event's value proposition. XPONENTIAL has evolved beyond a traditional trade exhibition into a major international platform for business development, government engagement, investment discussions, and cross-sector partnerships.

Startups are expected to play a particularly important role during the event, with emerging companies showcasing innovations across autonomy software, autonomous navigation, drone security, robotics integration, AI-enabled sensing, and infrastructure management. Investors and venture capital firms are likely to closely monitor technologies with dual-use potential across commercial and defence markets.

The defence dimension of the event is expected to expand further through dedicated military and security programming, reflecting the growing role autonomous systems are playing within modern defence strategies. Military officials, defence technology organisations, and industry executives are anticipated to discuss operational

lessons, procurement priorities, and future capability requirements related to autonomous operations.

Meanwhile, commercial applications of autonomy continue expanding rapidly across energy, agriculture, mining, public safety, logistics, environmental monitoring, and infrastructure inspection sectors. Companies are increasingly deploying autonomous systems to improve operational efficiency, reduce costs, enhance worker safety, and accelerate data-driven decision-making processes.

Another closely watched topic throughout XPONENTIAL 2026 will likely involve resilient navigation technologies. With growing concerns surrounding GNSS interference, spoofing threats, and contested operational environments, industry focus is shifting toward secure positioning, alternative navigation architectures, and multi-layered resilience strategies capable of supporting mission-critical autonomous operations.

The broader atmosphere surrounding XPONENTIAL 2026 reflects the accelerating maturity of the global autonomy sector. The industry is moving beyond isolated demonstrations and pilot projects into real-world deployment environments where scalability, operational reliability, cybersecurity, and economic sustainability have

become essential priorities.

At the same time, debates surrounding ethics, security, privacy, and military applications of autonomous systems are expected to continue shaping conversations throughout the conference. As autonomy becomes increasingly integrated into society and national security infrastructures, governments and industry leaders face growing pressure to establish transparent operational frameworks and responsible deployment practices.

Ultimately, XPONENTIAL 2026 is expected to provide a comprehensive snapshot of where the global unmanned systems and robotics industry is heading over the coming decade. From AI-enabled ISR and defence autonomy to urban air mobility, advanced robotics, and next-generation counter-drone technologies, the event is likely to highlight both the opportunities and strategic challenges shaping the future of autonomy worldwide.

As governments, defence organisations, and commercial industries continue accelerating investments into intelligent autonomous systems, XPONENTIAL 2026 is positioned to become one of the defining international platforms driving the next phase of aerospace, robotics, and autonomous technology evolution.



## AUTOFLIGHT COMPLETES FIRST 2-TON-CLASS EVTOL TEA DELIVERY IN CHINA



**A**UTOFLIGHT has successfully completed China's first 2-ton-class eVTOL dedicated spring tea transport trial in Guizhou, a mountainous province in western China. The trial deployed AutoFlight's CarryAll (V2000CG) - a fully autonomous, unmanned eVTOL aircraft - to transport fresh spring tea between Anshun and Guiyang, two Guizhou cities approximately 120km apart. The unmanned flight crossed rugged mountain terrain in just 37 minutes, a significant improvement over road transportation in the region.

Following the eVTOL air transfer, the fresh tea was transported via high-speed rail for long-haul delivery from Guiyang to Shanghai, covering a distance of nearly 2,000 kilometers. The integrated "eVTOL + high-speed rail" model enabled same-day delivery, bringing freshly picked tea from remote western mountain plantations to consumers in major eastern cities within 24 hours.

### Core Advantages of the Autonomous eVTOL Solution

**Autonomous Flight Capability:** No onboard pilot needed, enhancing safety and operational efficiency for cargo transport

**High-Speed Performance:** 37 minutes for the 120km mountain crossing, cutting transit time by hours compared to traditional ground transport

**Eco-Friendly:** All-electric powered, zero operational emissions and low noise, aligning with sustainable development goals

**High Flexibility:** Vertical take-off and landing capability, no runway required for point-to-point direct delivery

**About the AutoFlight CarryAll (V2000CG) :** The CarryAll (V2000CG) is the world's first 2-ton-class eVTOL aircraft to obtain Type Certificate (TC), Production Certificate (PC) and Airworthiness Certificate (AC) from the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC). As a fully autonomous unmanned cargo aircraft, it boasts exceptional performance for a wide range of logistics scenarios:

Maximum payload: 400kg

Maximum range: up to 200km

Cruise speed: approximately 180km/h

Li Yun, CCO of AutoFlight: "This innovative 'autonomous eVTOL air transfer + high-speed rail trunk line' model breaks logistics bottlenecks in high-altitude mountainous areas. AutoFlight will join hands with more partners to extend this efficient, green autonomous cargo model to more specialty agricultural producing areas. This will help more high-quality local agricultural products reach national markets quickly, driving regional industrial upgrading and rural revitalization."

AutoFlight's cargo eVTOL models have conducted flight operations in real-world scenarios, including offshore oil platforms, intercity agricultural product transportation, and emergency fire-fighting, collaborating with global customers to advance the commercialization process of eVTOL. In addition, its 6-seat passenger eVTOL model V2000EM Prosperity is currently undergoing civil aviation airworthiness certification by the CAAC and has entered the Phase IV compliance verification stage.

## SMARTFLYER AND H55 ADVANCE ELECTRIC AVIATION WITH 1ST DELIVERY OF CERTIFIABLE BATTERY MODULES FOR THE SFX1 AIRCRAFT



**S**martflyer announces the successful delivery of the first batch of Adagio battery modules from H55, marking not only a key milestone in the development of the Smartflyer SFX1 aircraft, but also a significant step in the industrialisation and commercial deployment of H55's certified electric propulsion technologies.

For Smartflyer, the delivery represents a critical step forward in the SFX1 Proof of Concept Demonstrator program, enabling the transition from component-level validation to full system integration and testing. For H55, it marks the continued integration of its certification-ready battery systems into active aircraft programs, reinforcing its position as a provider of scalable, commercially deployable electric propulsion solutions.

The newly delivered Adagio battery modules will be integrated into the SFX1 Aircraft as part of the next phase of development. This includes comprehensive system-level validation covering propulsion architecture, energy management, and other critical aircraft systems, in preparation for the upcoming ground test campaign.

At the same time, this milestone reflects the maturity and readiness of H55's product portfolio. The Adagio battery system has successfully completed all regulator-required certification tests, demonstrating its safety, reliability, and suitability for integration across a growing range of electric and hybrid-electric aircraft applications.

The SFX1 program is now entering an advanced stage of development, with integration activities intensifying across multiple workstreams. Ongoing efforts focus on coordinating installation, calibration, and test readiness to ensure a smooth transition into the next milestones. Ground testing of the SFX1 is planned for this summer, with the first flight targeted for autumn, keeping the program aligned with its development roadmap.

"Receiving the first Adagio battery modules from H55 is a major milestone for Smartflyer and a key enabler for the next phase of our development program. It also highlights the strength of our collaboration with a partner whose technology is not only innovative but ready for real-world application. Together, we are taking concrete steps toward bringing efficient and sustainable aviation solutions to market" said Rolf Stuber, CEO of Smartflyer.

"This delivery marks an important step in bringing H55's certified battery and propulsion solutions into operational aircraft programs. Our collaboration with Smartflyer illustrates how our technology, spanning both electric and hybrid-electric configurations, is moving from development into commercial application, enabling aircraft manufacturers to accelerate their path to flight. We are proud to support the SFX1 program and contribute to the broader adoption of electric and hybrid-electric aviation" said Rob Solomon, Chief Executive Officer of H55

*Eliminating Uncertainty in the Sky*

*The breakthrough technology delivering precise heading, reduced drift, and dependable UAV performance in complex environments.*



Feature interview by Drones World Editor Kartikeya

**Andreas Thiel**  
CEO (u-blox)

**Q** The ZED-X20D marks a clear push into the U.S. autonomy market. What specific operational or technological gaps in UAV navigation are you aiming to solve with this launch?

**A** ZED-X20D is based on the u-blox innovative all-band (L1, L2, L5, L6, L-band) X20 high precision GNSS technology, it is a breakthrough dual-antenna solution that delivers robust centimeter-level RTK positioning and reliable, motion-independent high precise heading information, bringing capabilities previously limited to high-end niche systems into the global UAV mass market. With a 1-meter geodetic antenna baseline, open sky, ZED-X20D can deliver best-in-class heading accuracy at approximately 0.1° RMS.

**Q** The module introduces motion-independent GNSS heading. How does this capability improve performance in low-speed or stationary drone operations compared to conventional GNSS-IMU fusion systems?

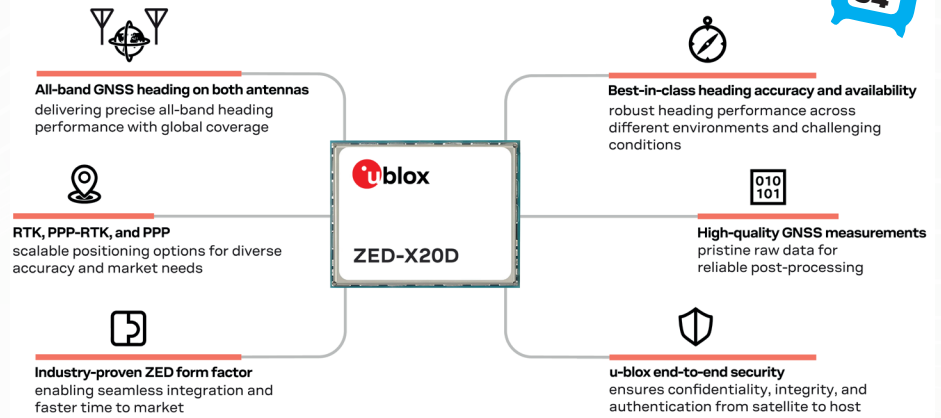
**A** Unlike the conventional GNSS-IMU fusion system which is a single-antenna solution depends on vehicle movement, gyroscope bias and IMU quality, ZED-X20D utilizes dual all-band antennas to compute heading information by measuring the relative position (baseline vector) between the two antennas using carrier-phase observations, thus allowing reliable and precise heading determination even when the device is at standstill or at low speed.

**Q** Small heading errors can translate into significant positional drift over distance. How does the ZED-X20D quantitatively improve navigation accuracy and mission reliability in real-world UAV deployments?

**A** A 1° heading error results in approximately 17 m of lateral position error over just 1 km of flight. Therefore, to have accurate heading information before take-off or during hover and low-speed flying is very important for UAVs, particularly for commercial and mission-critical drone operations.

Thanks to all-band support on both GNSS antennas, ZED-X20D delivers precise heading information based on carrier-phase differencing from two fixed installed antennas, completely independent of UAV motion. This enables true, absolute heading estimation even when stationary or flying slowly, prevents meter-level position 'walk' during these operation phases, and helps to eliminate yaw drift accumulation from gyroscope bias.

In addition, ZED-X20D's advanced security and integrity features help mitigate GNSS interference and ensure the delivery of accurate heading information during the whole UAV operation, improving overall navigation accuracy and



End-to-end security and all-band GNSS are no longer optional—they are foundational for safe, scalable commercial drone operations.”

mission reliability.

**Q** The “all bands on both antennas” approach is positioned as a key differentiator. What measurable performance gains does this deliver in contested or degraded GNSS environments?

**A** ZED-X20D supports all GNSS constellations on L1, L2, L5, and L6 on both antennas, as well as L-band. This “all band on both antennas – no compromises” approach increases signal observability, redundancy, and attack detectability, thus maximizing heading availability, continuity and integrity, delivering best-in-class positioning and heading accuracy in challenging GNSS conditions.

All-band support on both antennas also helps ZED-X20D to achieve faster recovery in case of interference or signal loss compared to none all-band heading module. It is a robustness solution for real-world heading applications.

**Q** With increasing concerns around GNSS jamming and spoofing, how critical is end-to-end security becoming for commercial drone operations, and how does ZED-X20D address these risks at a system level?

**A** End-to-end security is rapidly becoming foundational for commercial drone operations, nowadays it is a public-space and national-security concern.

In addition to the all-band RF architecture on both antennas, the ZED-X20D is designed with u-blox end-to-end hardened security, which protects heading and positioning data from satellite to host. It features secure boot, signed firmware, and a hardware root of trust for cryptographic material, supports Galileo OSNMA, and uses encrypted correction data. All-band frequency diversity and advanced

interference monitoring provide robust protection against jamming and other threats, helping end customers to maintain trustworthy operation in critical applications. ZED-X20D is an ideal GNSS-based heading module for commercial drone's safe and scalable operation, as well as for high-value mission-critical drone applications.

**Q** The module supports RTK, PPP-RTK, PPP, and integrates with PointPerfect and Galileo HAS. How does this flexibility impact deployment cost, scalability, and adoption across different UAV use cases?

**A** To meet diverse positioning accuracy and deployment needs of UAV applications, the ZED-X20D supports RTK, PPP-RTK, and PPP correction services. Thanks to the comprehensive portfolio of u-blox PointPerfect (PointPerfect Live – regional network RTK; PointPerfect Flex – usage based continental PPP-RTK; PointPerfect Global – worldwide PPP-AR via IP + L-band), and built-in support for Galileo E6 enables the free-to-use Galileo High Accuracy Service (HAS), customers have the best possible flexibility for selecting the most suitable correction service according to their UAV use cases.

**Q** With growing demand in the U.S. for trusted, non-restricted technology sources, how does u-blox differentiate itself strategically from other GNSS providers in the autonomy ecosystem?

**A** u-blox, a reliable European GNSS solution provider, has built up a high precision RTK industry standard for a wide-range of mass-market autonomy applications. u-blox continues innovation in resilience, all-band GNSS technology, advanced security and integrity, as well as developing the u-blox antenna portfolio and u-blox PointPerfect correction service as parts of the high precision GNSS ecosystem to support the mass adoption.

As a trustful long-term partner, u-blox provides a complete solution that brings together leading hardware and software, high product quality, services, and customer support, covering the entire lifecycle of customer applications.

# VERTICAL AEROSPACE ACHIEVES WORLD FIRST TWO-WAY PILOTED TRANSITION FLIGHT

Vertical Aerospace, a global aerospace and technology company pioneering electric aviation, has successfully completed a historic two-way piloted transition flight. On 14 April 2026, Vertical became the second company globally to complete a two-way piloted transition flight in a full-scale tiltrotor eVTOL and the first to do so under civil aviation Design Organisation Approval regulatory oversight.

Chief Test Pilot Simon Davies completed the flight - transitioning from vertical take-off to wingborne cruise and back to vertical landing - all in one continuous flight. This builds on Vertical's thrustborne transition on 2 April 2026 and marks the completion of two-way transition, the defining capability of eVTOL aviation.

Put simply, this is what makes electric air taxis possible. Transition flight validates the technology which will enable Valo, Vertical's commercial aircraft, to take off vertically from a city-centre vertiport or rooftop with passengers, fly efficiently at speed like an airplane, and land vertically at its destination - comfortably, quietly and without a runway. This unlocks planned real-world routes such as Canary Wharf to Heathrow or JFK to Manhattan, making them operationally and commercially viable.

Stuart Simpson, CEO, Vertical Aerospace, said: "This is now the most significant technical milestone in our history. Full piloted transition is the most critical and complex challenge in eVTOL development, and we've achieved it under more rigorous regulatory oversight than anyone in the category. We're not just participating in this industry - we are helping to define it. Our focus now is on executing our roadmap and bringing certified electric flight into commercial service."

**Path to Certification**  
As with all Vertical flight tests since 2023, this milestone was achieved under the direct oversight of the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), who are working in close collaboration with the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) toward Type Certification of Valo. Testing is conducted under Vertical's Design Organisation Approval, a pre-requisite for entry into service.

With all phases of flight now proven - vertical take-off, wingborne flight and transition between the two - Vertical is moving into the next stage of certification testing. This will include critical design review, when the aircraft design is locked, followed by the build of seven pre-production Valo aircraft in the UK for compliance and verification testing with the CAA and EASA.

Vertical is targeting certification of Valo in 2028 to the highest safety standards in the category, with entry into service expected shortly thereafter. The certification approach is designed to be transferable



to other regulators, including the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Brazil's National Civil Aviation Agency (ANAC) and the Japan Civil Aviation Bureau (JCAB), supporting global deployment with airline and operating partners including American Airlines, Avolon, Bristow, GOL and Japan Airlines.

Steve Johnson, Vice Chair and Chief Strategy Officer, American Airlines, said: "Advanced air mobility represents a natural extension of American's broader commitment to innovation and shaping the next era of aviation. As both an investor and long-term supporter of Vertical Aerospace, we share a clear ambition to make safe, scalable, and sustainable eVTOL flight a reality, and today's news is a foundational step toward that end. Together, we're not just imagining the future of travel, we're actively building it."

UK Secretary of State for Business and Trade, Peter Kyle, said: "This is a fantastic milestone not only for Vertical, but for the UK's position in the future of aerospace as we continue to lead the way on zero emission flight.

"Through our Industrial Strategy and the Aerospace Technology Institute we're backing companies like Vertical who are demonstrating the kind of innovation, engineering excellence and export potential that can keep Britain at the forefront of the global aerospace industry, and create high-skilled jobs for local people."

Bob Buddecke, president, Electronic Solutions, Honeywell Aerospace, said: "Successful transition flight represents meaningful progress not only for Vertical, but for the entire advanced air mobility industry.

"Our Compact Fly-by-Wire team worked closely with Vertical's team to help enable the successful flight, and we expect countless more to come. Vertical's progress underscores the strength of our joint engineering

approach and the importance of disciplined system integration in bringing next-generation aircraft to market"

A Major Opportunity for the UK  
As Europe's only eVTOL developer to achieve full piloted transition, this milestone reinforces the UK's position at the forefront of next-generation aerospace.

Vertical expects its UK-based manufacturing and supply chain to support thousands of high-skilled jobs and significant export growth, with its ecosystem projected to grow to over 2,000 jobs by 2035.

**Progressing Key Strategic Milestones**  
Vertical will continue its focus on executing key strategic milestones over the next twelve months and beyond. These include public flight demonstrations, including at Farnborough International Airshow in July, progression of the hybrid-electric demonstrator, expansion of the Vertical Energy Center, advancement of the manufacturing facility, and production of the first full-scale Valo certification aircraft.

Vertical's piloted flight test programme explainer:

Phase 1: Tethered - stabilised hover while tethered (Completed September 2024)

Phase 2: Thrustborne - vertical take-off, landing and low-speed manoeuvres (Completed February 2025)

Phase 3: Wingborne - conventional take-off, flight and landing (Completed September 2025)

Phase 4: Transition - transitioning between thrustborne and wingborne flight

Thrustborne transition (vertical take-off to wingborne flight): Completed April 2026

Two-way transition (including return to vertical landing): Completed April 2026

## HANWHA AEROSPACE SIGNS MOU WITH INDRA GROUP FOR LATIN AMERICAN DEFENCE COOPERATION

Hanwha Aerospace has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with defence and technology company Indra Group to jointly promote armoured vehicle solutions for the Chilean Army and cooperate across Latin America.

The signing ceremony took place at the FIDAE International Air and Space Fair in Santiago, Chile.

Dong Hyeon Kim, Head of Hanwha Aerospace's Land Systems Business Group, Domingo Castro Fernández, Indra's Director of Defence and Security for America, and María Dolores Carrillo Aguilera, Indra's Business Development Director of Land Systems, attended the ceremony.

The Republic of Korea's Ambassador to Chile, Hak-jae Kim, was also present and delivered congratulatory remarks.

Under the agreement, the two companies will jointly promote a combined solution for Chile's next-generation armoured vehicle program. Hanwha Aerospace will supply armoured vehicle platforms, while Indra will provide Mission System Equipment



(connectivity, situational awareness and C2 among others) and serve as the regional coordination lead. The partnership also covers broader cooperation on ground defence programs in other countries.

"Indra has defence electronics capabilities and a track record in Latin America that complement our vehicle platforms. Through this MOU, the two companies will be able to offer a more complete package to armed forces in the region," said Dong

Hyeon Kim, Head of Hanwha Aerospace's Land Systems Business Group

"This partnership creates an optimum framework for combining the core technologies and areas of excellence of both companies into a competitive, state-of-the-art product, capable of fulfilling to a high demand in the region" Domingo Castro Fernández, Indra's Director of Defence and Security for America.

## H55 SELECTS SAFRAN TO SUPPLY THE ELECTRIC PROPULSION UNIT FOR THE BRISTELL B23 ENERGIIC

Safran Electrical & Power and H55 have signed an agreement to integrate the Safran ENGINEUS electric motor into the H55 electric propulsion system, powering the fully electric Bristell B23 Energiic aircraft.

This collaboration aims to deliver certified electric propulsion solutions for general aviation, targeting CS-23 / Part 23 Level 1 and 2 aircraft. It combines Safran's EASA certified ENGINEUS electric motor technology with H55's energy storage and propulsion integration capabilities. With certification remaining the main barrier to entry in electric aviation, both companies have recently achieved key EASA certification milestones. Building on this combined expertise, the partnership will accelerate the availability of certified electric propulsion solutions for next-generation 2-6 seat aircraft.

The Bristell B23 Energiic program serves as the initial certification platform for general aviation, targeting the rapidly expanding electric pilot training market. This market is driven by increasing demand for lower operating costs and zero-emission operations.

Safran Electrical & Power will support both the prototype and serial production phases, beginning in 2027, and will also deliver dedicated in-service support.



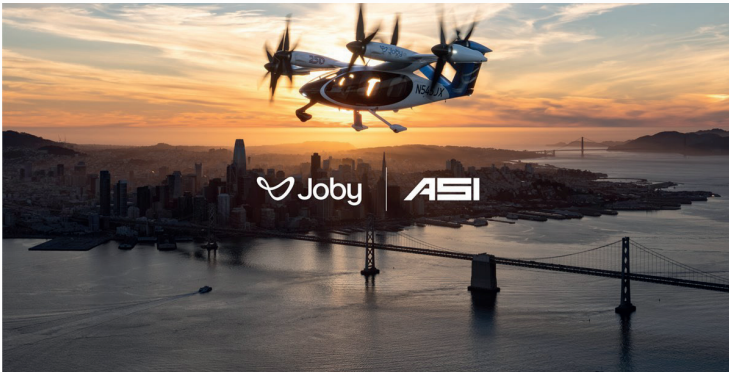
"We are pleased that H55 has selected ENGINEUS for its propulsion system on the Bristell B23 Energiic. As the only certified electric motor in the aviation market, ENGINEUS continues to set the industry standard, offering an outstanding power-to-weight ratio and proven, reliable performance while fully addressing market requirements. ENGINEUS enables the development of both all-electric and hybrid aircraft, making it a key asset for introducing fully certified and integrated solutions to the market," said Agnès Pronost-Gilles, Executive Vice President & General Manager, Power Division, Safran Electrical & Power.

"This partnership brings together the two companies

that have done the hardest work in certified electric aviation for light aircraft – eight years of H55 building the only battery architecture to complete an EASA-witnessed module test campaign, and Safran delivering the ENGINEUS motor family as the benchmark for certified electric propulsion in the light general aviation market. When you combine the standard-bearer for certified energy storage with the standard-bearer for certified electric motors, you give OEMs something they haven't had: a complete, certifiable electric propulsion system they can build an aircraft around – and that compresses the path to certified aircraft by years, not months," said Rob Solomon, CEO for H55.

"Flight schools from Europe to North America already build their fleets around the Bristell B23, a platform certified under both EASA and FAA and available across several engine configurations. Adding certified electric propulsion from H55 and Safran to this foundation means operators can transition to zero-emission training with minimal disruption. Same cockpit, same support network, new powertrain. That is a practical path to electric flight" said Martin Bristela, CEO and Co-Founder, Bristell - BRM AERO.

## JOBY AND AIR SPACE INTELLIGENCE PARTNER TO PREPARE US AIRSPACE FOR SCALED ELECTRIC FLIGHT



Joby Aviation, Inc. a company developing all-electric aircraft for commercial passenger service, and Air Space Intelligence (ASI), a leading U.S.-based aerospace and defense software company announced a partnership to accelerate the integration of advanced air mobility (AAM) into the U.S. National Airspace System.

Building on ASI's Flyways AI Platform – an open AI-powered airspace intelligence platform that uses high-fidelity 4D modeling to optimize flight operations – Joby and ASI plan to work together to advance how scaled eVTOL operations can be safely integrated into dynamic, increasingly complex and high-traffic airspace. Joint demonstrations, including live operational exercises, are expected later this year.

With the FAA's Brand New Air Traffic Control System (BNATCS) set to form the foundation for the next generation of air traffic management, the partnership will also explore how more automated, software-defined approaches to airspace coordination can enable increasingly autonomous flight operations.

"America has long set the global standard for aviation, and modernizing our airspace is key to maintaining that leadership," said Greg Bowles, Chief Policy Officer, Joby Aviation. "By combining Joby's operational capabilities with ASI's advanced AI-driven Flyways platform, we're helping build the intelligent infrastructure needed to integrate electric air taxis seamlessly into the NAS – one of America's most important national assets."

"Scaling advanced air mobility requires more than new aircraft – it requires a new operating system for the airspace," said Bernard Asare, President, Civil Aviation, Air Space Intelligence. "Our Flyways AI platform gives operators and controllers the predictive awareness to coordinate high-density operations proactively, not reactively. This partnership brings that same capability to eVTOL operations from day one."

Together, the companies will leverage Joby's operational experience and aircraft capabilities alongside ASI's AI-driven airspace intelligence to develop joint solutions that demonstrate how eVTOL operations can scale safely within the existing airspace framework. Initial results from the partnership's live operational exercises are expected by the end of 2026.

Last month, Joby completed a series of piloted demonstration flights across the San Francisco Bay Area, showcasing the company's operational readiness. Joby was also recently selected as a partner in multiple winning applications under the White House-backed eVTOL Integration Pilot Program (eIPP). Through the program, Joby has the opportunity to begin early operations this year in 12 states, marking a major milestone for the U.S. air taxi industry and potentially accelerating Joby's path to commercial service.

ASI is leading operational transformation and delivering mission-critical decision-making systems to aviation, defense, logistics, and energy organizations operating in dynamic, complex environments. The partnership with Joby extends ASI's proven airspace intelligence capabilities to the emerging eVTOL sector, helping ensure that as electric flight operations grow, the airspace system is ready to support them safely and efficiently.

## AURORA SUPPORTS HISTORIC 1ST FLIGHT OF WISK GEN 6 AIRCRAFT



Aurora Flight Sciences, a Boeing company, provided engineering expertise to support the design of Wisk's Generation 6 aircraft, which recently completed its first flight. Wisk's Gen 6 is the first-ever candidate for an FAA-certified commercial autonomous passenger aircraft. Aurora's contributions supported the program's demanding safety and performance goals.

Clint Church, Aurora's interim president and CEO, emphasized the broader significance of the accomplishment. "The first flight is the culmination of years of collaboration with Wisk to design and build the Generation 6 aircraft. It's a testament to the team's collective expertise and it lays the groundwork for certification of the world's first all-electric, autonomous 4-seat air taxi."

During the test, the aircraft performed vertical takeoff, hover, and stabilized flight maneuvers, validating its core flight systems. Aurora engineers supported battery development and testing; aircraft design; subsystem integration; guidance, navigation and control (GNC) systems; and materials processing for the test aircraft.

**Energy Storage :** One of Aurora's key responsibilities included validating the performance and safety of the battery system that powers the aircraft's electric propulsion. Aurora engineers conducted rigorous evaluations to make sure the batteries could store enough energy, handle heat safely, and keep wiring intact during stress. These tests were critical to confirm that the aircraft could deliver consistent power while mitigating risk, a top priority for electric propulsion systems.

**Stability and Control :** Aurora also played a major role in shaping the aircraft's aerodynamic stability and control. Hovering may appear simple, but it demands precise balance and responsiveness. Aurora's flight physics team helped fine-tune the aerodynamics and control systems to keep the aircraft steady during the flight. This capability is essential for operational reliability and sets the stage for more complex autonomous maneuvers.

Aurora's expertise in GNC provided the precision needed for the aircraft to safely fly and land without an onboard pilot. Aurora integrated critical computing subsystems, creating seamless communication between hardware and software components.

**Structural Integrity :** Aurora's materials, processes, and testing (MPT) team provided expertise to make the Gen 6 aircraft strong, safe, and ready for flight. The team ran engineering tests to confirm bonding strength, surface preparation methods, and lightning strike protection, ensuring the aircraft could withstand real-world conditions.

Today, Aurora continues to work with Wisk to execute its flight test program, which is focused on validating the design, simulation models, and performance of the Gen 6 aircraft.

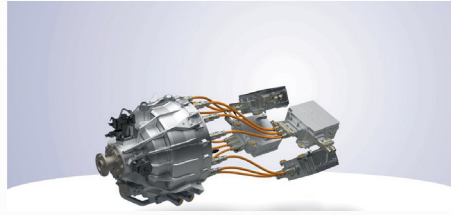
## FAA PUBLISHES SPECIAL CONDITIONS FOR ZEROAVIA'S 600KW ELECTRIC ENGINE FOR AIRCRAFT

ZeroAvia announced that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has published the special conditions for the company's electric engine as a Final Rule to the Federal Register. This represents a major step towards type certification of ZeroAvia's electric propulsion system and wider hydrogen-electric powertrain.

The special conditions advance ZeroAvia's readiness to progress through the certification process following the FAA issuing G1 and P1 issue papers last year. It caps off a run of milestones with the respective regulators overseeing the company's certification projects, including the UK CAA awarding the company Design Organization Approval in October last year.

Given the novelty involved in electric engines for aircraft, the special conditions contain the additional safety standards that the FAA Administrator considers necessary to establish a level of safety equivalent to that established by existing airworthiness standards. As the world's only hydrogen-electric focused Design Organization Approval OEM, ZeroAvia has demonstrated it has the maturity, processes and procedures to provide confidence to regulators that it can comply with stringent requirements.

Val Miftakhov, Founder & CEO, ZeroAvia said: "Having special conditions for our electric propulsion system published by the FAA is an enormous achievement that



underscores the aerospace maturity of our organization and illuminates our path forwards towards type certification."

"It's rapid progress from both industry and regulators that bodes well for progressing the electric age of flight."

ZeroAvia's electric propulsion system (EPS) combines its proprietary 600kW motor and inverter technology and is an integral part of the company's planned full hydrogen-electric powertrain for 10-20 seat commercial aircraft, the ZA600.

For the full powertrain, the EPS will be powered by multiple ZeroAvia SuperStack Flex 200kW fuel cell modules, and the company is now focused on advancing regulatory maturity of this power generation system to serve in the full powertrain, but also as a discreet product for UAV, eVTOL and general aviation applications. The system is already being supplied to the defense sector and in active discussions with prospective civil aviation-focused OEMs.

ZeroAvia has established unique, advanced testing capabilities to enable rapid testing of its own technology as well as industry collaboration, including a 700kW dynamometer electric engine test rig, segregated hydrogen fuel cell and thermal management system test environment, a hydrogen management system environment, and a state-of-the-art data acquisition setup.

The combination of design maturity, regulatory readiness and in-house test capability provides ZeroAvia with the necessary posture to build upon existing regulatory milestones with its current focus on the 200kW fuel cell power module.

ZeroAvia's regulatory progress is one of a number of major bright spots for the development of hydrogen in aviation, including Airbus's recent announcement that its 100 seat, hydrogen-electric regional clean-sheet aircraft has reached TRL3, and also multiple large-scale electrolytic hydrogen production projects entering operation or Final Investment Decision.

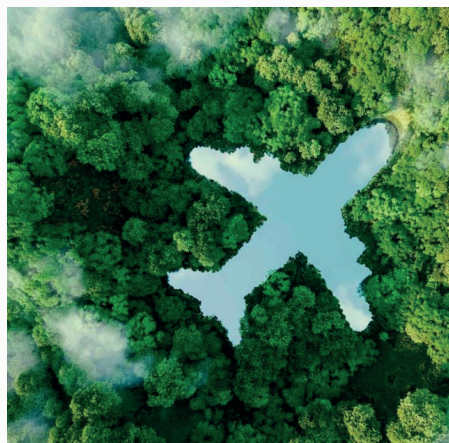
Val Miftakhov concluded: "The fundamentals have not changed - electric aircraft are better aircraft with zero-emissions, less noise and better operating economics, and hydrogen is key to unlocking practical range and endurance. What we are seeing now is real momentum in terms of airframe development and fuel production. It's the beginning of the transformation in earnest."

## PHELAN GREEN SELECTS HONEYWELL PROCESS TECHNOLOGY FOR FLAGSHIP SOUTH AFRICAN eSAF FACILITY

Phelan Green, through its clean fuels subsidiary Phelan eFuels, announced it has selected Honeywell's renewable fuel process technology for its planned electro-sustainable aviation fuel (eSAF) facility in Saldanha Bay, Western Cape, South Africa.

Phelan eFuels will deploy Honeywell UOP's Fischer Tropsch (FT) Unicracking™ process technology, which uses FT liquids and waxes made from CO<sub>2</sub> to create eSAF that complies with aviation industry standards.

"We selected Honeywell's Fischer Tropsch Unicracking process technology because it provides a proven, bankable pathway to produce sustainable aviation fuel at scale," said Chairman Paschal Phelan. "This project is a major milestone for Phelan Green and for South Africa's emerging eFuels economy, and demonstrates our commitment to industrial development, job creation and innovative energy projects that are at the cutting edge of emission



reduction."

The new facility forms a core part of the Phelan Green Hydrogen Project, a R47 billion (approximately US \$2.5 billion) private investment that has been formally

recognized by the South African government as a nationally strategic green industrial development. Once operational, the project will be one of the world's first commercial-scale eSAF production facilities supplying more than 140,000 tons of eSAF to the EU and UK markets.

"Honeywell's technologies are designed to enable scalable, efficient and flexible production of low-carbon fuels," said Rajesh Gattupalli, president of Honeywell UOP. "In this case, our Fischer Tropsch Unicracking process technology will help support Phelan eFuels' goal to encourage commercial scale sustainable aviation fuel production in South Africa."

Construction of the Saldanha Bay facility will commence in Q4 2026 and will support thousands of local jobs across multiple phases, helping position the country as a competitive export hub for next-generation aviation fuels.

# SKYDRIVE AND WEST NIPPON EXPRESSWAY COMPANY SIGN PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ON ADVANCED AIR MOBILITY

SkyDrive Inc. a leading eVTOL aircraft manufacturer based in Japan, has announced the signing of a new partnership agreement with West Nippon Expressway Company (NEXCO West). Under the agreement, both parties will investigate the commercial feasibility of advanced air mobility (eVTOL) services based in expressway parking and service areas.

**Background :** SkyDrive is developing eVTOLs with the mission of “leading a once-in-a-century mobility revolution”. Our goal is to make simple and convenient air travel a regular part of city life. During 2025, over a period of around six weeks, SkyDrive successfully showcased demonstration flights of the “SKYDRIVE” (SkyDrive Model SD-05) both at the Expo 2025 Osaka and at a second vertiport within the city of Osaka. Having conducted further demonstration flights in Tokyo during February 2026, we are driving towards our next major milestone: commercial operations in 2028.

Under its “MOVE!2030” mid-term management plan, West Nippon Expressway Company (NEXCO West) is committed to creating new value and contributing to regional economic development, working to resolve the issues that affect communities through active involvement in new areas of business.

SkyDrive’s ties with NEXCO West began when research into the future potential of air mobility led us to focus on the service and parking areas as potential sites for eVTOL vertiports (takeoff and landing pads). With service areas and parking areas accessible at intervals of between 10 and 30 kilometers, vertiports within these facilities would allow the next generation of air mobility technology to create added value and contribute to the regional development of the communities running alongside the expressway network.

NEXCO West decided to partner with SkyDrive as SkyDrive’s goals not only chime with NEXCO West’s mid-term management plan, they also align with the philosophy of creating a legacy from the 2025 Expo in Osaka, as supported by the Kansai Economic Federation (Kankeiren), an umbrella organization for major corporations based in the Kansai region. NEXCO West is a longstanding and influential corporate member of the Kankeiren.

**Partnership Objectives and Scope**  
Through this partnership, SkyDrive and NEXCO West will investigate the commercial feasibility of using service areas and parking areas operated by NEXCO West as a hub for next generation air mobility services.

Driving new value, contributing to local economies  
Transforming the services and parking areas along NEXCO



West’s expressways into departure points for sightseeing flights and other advanced air mobility options will create new opportunities for added consumer value. Longer term, we hope that links between expressway and eVTOL services hubs can help stimulate local economies.

Improved post-disaster response  
SkyDrive’s aircraft can help authorities assess post-disaster damage from the air and consider post-disaster response options. Improved eVTOL access from alongside NEXCO West’s expressways can help mitigate the adverse impact of natural disasters.

**Where We Go from Here :** As our next step, SkyDrive and NEXCO West will look into how and where to best deploy SkyDrive’s air mobility services as we look to meet the public’s expectations over the value this next generation of aircraft can provide. Together, we aim to harness expressway service areas and parking areas as a base for new value creation, a source of regional economic stimulus, and a means of providing improved disaster mitigation response.

Comment from SkyDrive CEO Tomohiro Fukuzawa:  
SkyDrive is honored and delighted to enter into this partnership with NEXCO West. In developing our aircraft, we are looking to lead this “once-in-a-century” mobility revolution. This new partnership is a meaningful step forward for our business. Combining the expertise in managing road infrastructure delivered by NEXCO West with the easy access to short-hop air travel and sightseeing flights delivered by SkyDrive opens up a new realm of possibilities.

The service areas and parking areas within NEXCO West’s extensive network of expressways already serve large numbers of visitors. Adding air mobility services to the shopping and other facilities already on offer will add to the appeal of this highway infrastructure, turning these already busy waystations into a gateway to the

skies. SkyDrive’s air mobility services will not only be able to increase value for tourists through sightseeing flights, they may also help provide peace of mind to local residents through a future role in post-disaster recovery. In partnership with NEXCO West, we are proud to be taking firm steps towards new value creation as we work to bring the next generation of air mobility technology to people in the regions served by NEXCO West’s expressway network.

Comment from NEXCO West President and Representative Director Yoshiharu Shibamura: SkyDrive is Japan’s leading pioneer in bringing ‘flying cars’ to life, already working in close partnership with numerous local governments and infrastructure companies. We are deeply honored to have entered into an agreement to collaborate and move forward with these initiatives together. The future availability of sightseeing flights from our service and parking areas would bring new vitality and economic benefits to these facilities, further elevating them from rest facilities to destinations in their own right. Basing SkyDrive’s aircraft alongside our highways will also open up possibilities for assessing post-disaster damage and measures for reconstruction, helping to mitigate the adverse effects of Japan’s frequent earthquakes and other natural disasters.

As a corporate member of the Kansai Economic Federation (Kankeiren), we note how SkyDrive’s approach to air mobility also aligns with Kankeiren’s philosophy of harnessing the 2025 Expo in Osaka to spur the adoption into society of cutting-edge technology.

Through this partnership with SkyDrive, we look forward to pooling our resources and examining in detail the commercial and disaster mitigation possibilities of this remarkable new technology, ensuring that we work closely together to explore specific use cases and potential service areas.

## VOLOCOPTER LAUNCHES NEW PRODUCT: VOLOXPRO. AN ELECTRICALLY POWERED ULTRALIGHT MULTICOPTER FOR AIR SPORTS AND PROFESSIONAL PASSENGER TRANSPORT.

VoloCopter presents the newly developed VoloXPro aircraft – an electrically powered ultralight multicopter. Target groups in Europe include flight schools, flying clubs, air sports enthusiasts, and sightseeing flight operators. Internationally, the VoloXPro is intended for use as an air taxi in professional passenger transport. Certification as an ultralight aircraft is planned for Germany at the end of 2026, alongside parallel approval processes in other European countries.

The VoloXPro is a completely new development by VoloCopter, based in Bruchsal (Baden-Württemberg). It promises emission-neutral and low-noise multicopter flying for a wide range of users and applications. Its innovative platform concept enables VoloCopter to offer the VoloXPro in different technical configurations depending on the intended use and customer requirements.

The VoloXPro features a modular design. It incorporates components already developed for the VoloCity, designed for air taxi operations as well as medical and police transport. This results in an exceptionally high safety structure comparable to the reliability of a commercial airliner. This extraordinarily high safety

standard is new in Germany's ultralight aircraft category.

In addition to its high safety level, the modular design also allows VoloCopter to achieve attractive pricing for operators and private individuals. The shared use of technical components between the VoloCity and VoloXPro, combined with ultralight certification, significantly reduces costs.

Technology and Configuration Thanks to its modular design, the VoloXPro enables numerous technical configurations and equipment variants – from single-stick control and cost-efficient minimalist cockpit options to high-end versions for professional operators.

Air sports enthusiasts can assemble their multicopter from features such as a single-screen glass cockpit, assistance systems (e.g., collision warning), interior design elements, customizable exterior paintwork, fast charging, and various battery options.

David Bausek said "With the ultralight VoloXPro, electric multicopter flying at the safety standard of a passenger aircraft – at the price of a luxury car – will become possible for private customers and commercial operators. Thanks to the fly-by-wire control system, flying

is easier than ever before, and all of it is low-noise and emissions-free."

VoloXPro sets a new benchmark in powered-lift pilot training, combining advanced flight-assistance technology with aviation-grade safety standards. Designed for both aspiring pilots and professional training organizations, it enhances situational awareness, reduces pilot workload, and delivers stable, repeatable flight performance.

Beyond conventional training, VoloXPro prepares pilots for the demands of next-generation aviation. Its fully electric propulsion and fly-by-wire architecture enable a seamless transition to emerging eVTOL aircraft—bridging today's training environment with the future of advanced air mobility.

**Background :** VoloCopter and Diamond Aircraft worked intensively on the new development throughout 2025. They modularized their product portfolio, realigned the supply chain, and optimized individual components. The result is the VoloXPro: a strictly market-focused new development incorporating all know-how from previous generations. At AERO 2026 in Friedrichshafen, the VoloXPro will be introduced to industry experts and the general public for the first time.

## VAERIDION SELECTS GARMIN FLIGHT DISPLAYS TO POWER TEST CAMPAIGN OF ITS 100% ELECTRIC MICROLINER

VÆRIDION, a 100% electric aircraft manufacturer, announced the selection of Garmin® to equip VÆRIDION's initial Microliner test aircraft with G600 TXi™ flight displays, marking a key step toward the aircraft's first flight. As VÆRIDION accelerates toward Microliner's first flight, selecting the avionics provider represents a significant milestone in advancing the aircraft's development. The Microliner is slated to enter commercial service in 2030, bringing zero emissions commercial flight from the testing space to the runway.

Garmin is a leading provider for General Aviation platforms, powering a diverse portfolio of avionics solutions that serve markets ranging from rotorcraft and business jets to advanced air mobility programs and commercial air carriers. Its G600 TXi™ flight display combines proven performance with a highly flexible, configurable integration. The modern, intuitive touchscreen interface enhances operational efficiency and situational awareness,



while Garmin's innovative safety systems set a benchmark across the sector. Together, these capabilities make the Garmin flight displays an ideal choice – not only for launching the Microliner's flight-test campaign, but also as a foundation for future cockpit development.

"By combining innovative propulsion architecture with decades of aerospace know-how, our aircraft represents the best of both worlds. Equipping the Microliner with a best-in-class avionics suite from Garmin was a natural choice for us," said Markus Kochs-Kämper, CTO of VÆRIDION. "Particularly

for our test aircraft, the system provides reliability, flexibility, and situational awareness needed to support a rigorous flight-test campaign. We are proud to work alongside Garmin's team to bring our solution forward."

"We are honored to have the G600 TXi™ flight displays selected for VÆRIDION's test aircraft. The advanced flight display capabilities coupled with a touchscreen interface provide a modern solution and safety-enhancing technologies to the aircraft," said Carl Wolf, Vice President Aviation Sales, Marketing, Programs & Support at Garmin.

Meanwhile, VÆRIDION continues to scale its capabilities, having recently opened its battery manufacturing facility and test house at Oberpfaffenhofen special airport. This expansion further strengthens the company's vertical integration, enhances control over critical technologies, and supports the timeline toward first flight and beyond.

## HANWHA AND MAGNET DEFENSE FORMALIZE MUSV STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Hanwha Defense USA (HDUSA) and Miami-based autonomous maritime company Magnet Defense announced a strategic partnership to produce medium unmanned surface vessels (MUSVs) for the U.S. Department of War. The partnership includes several potential projects, such as producing advanced, cost-effective, and highly capable 38-meter MUSVs.

Magnet Defense's flagship MUSV, the M48, which has a range of 17,000 nautical miles, the longest range of any MUSV at sea today, is already sea-tested after sailing round-trip from Miami to American Samoa in 2024 and multiple open water missions earlier this year. Its 32,000-nautical-mile voyage included passage through the Panama Canal and through Sea State 9 conditions to prove its stability and reliability in hazardous conditions.



“Hanwha remains committed to fielding the most capable and lethal MUSVs to support American warfighters and other allies in times of conflict,” said HDUSA CEO Michael Coulter. “By partnering with Magnet Defense, Hanwha can utilize its manufacturing capacity and advanced robotics and pair these capabilities with Magnet Defense’s proven autonomy and technology.”

“Hanwha’s advanced missile systems, coupled with Magnet Defense’s designed and built MUSVs, make for a powerful combination,” said Magnet Defense CEO Marc Bell. “Our ability to project force globally by working together in quick response to America’s Armed Forces needs is critical in today’s ever-changing environment.”

Under the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed at the 2026 Sea-Air-Space Exposition, the companies will work to jointly build a 38-meter MUSV, configure vessel capabilities, develop state-of-the-art AI-driven robotic shipyards of the future, and collaborate on advanced AI software for improving autonomy.

## RHEINMETALL KRAKEN LAUNCHES SERIES PRODUCTION OF MARITIME UNMANNED SYSTEMS IN HAMBURG

Series production of the Kraken I3 Scout has begun at Rheinmetall’s Blohm+Voss site in Hamburg. With the market-ready unmanned surface vessel (USV), Rheinmetall’s new Naval Systems division—together with its British joint venture partner Kraken Technology Group—offers a surface platform for both military and civilian applications. Depending on the configuration, the vessels can be used for maritime surveillance, protection of critical infrastructure, or as weapons carriers in military operations.

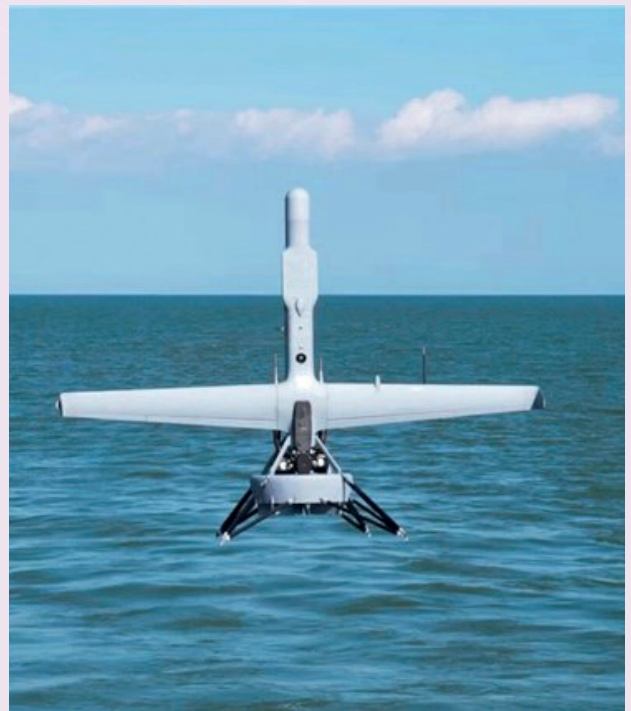
The joint venture established last year between Rheinmetall Naval Systems and the British tech company Kraken Technology Group will now operate under the name “Rheinmetall Kraken GmbH.” The partnership addresses the growing global demand for market-available unmanned platforms of various sizes.



Production of the systems—which are capable of speeds of up to 55 knots, measure 8.4 metres in length, and are individually configurable—takes place at Rheinmetall’s shipyard Blohm+Voss in Hamburg, a site that the Düsseldorf-based company is developing into Germany’s leading test and technology centre for unmanned and autonomous marine systems.

“Production of the Kraken I3 Scout is initially designed for around 200 units per year. Depending on the order volume, we can scale up production to as many as 1,000 units annually,” says Tim Wagner, CEO of Rheinmetall’s Naval Systems division. With five locations in Germany, the Naval Systems division specialises in the construction of complex naval and coast guard vessels and is a pioneer in the development of unmanned and autonomous surface systems.

## SHIELD AI SELECTED BY US NAVY TO COMPETE FOR \$800M IN ISR SERVICES WITH V-BAT



Shield AI announced its selection by the United States Navy to provide contractor-owned, contractor-operated (COCO) intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) services in support of naval and joint force operations.

Under the Navy’s initiative to expand and modernize ISR capabilities, Shield AI will compete for up to \$800 million in task orders alongside other selected industry partners, delivering persistent ISR using its V-BAT vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) uncrewed aircraft system (UAS).

“V-BAT has delivered more operational outcomes than any other Group 3 VTOL UAS. We’ve interdicted over 100,000 lbs of narcotics in the Caribbean and Pacific. V-BAT has executed hundreds of targeting operations in Ukraine, where GPS and communications are jammed during every mission, and we have delivered substantial outcomes in the Middle East and with our allies and partners,” said Brandon Tseng, Shield AI’s co-founder, president and a former Navy Surface Warfare Officer and SEAL. “We aren’t just bringing the V-BAT product and service to the Navy; we’re bringing a world-class team with a wealth of operational experience and the ability to produce undeniable outcomes for our warfighters.”

V-BAT is a Group 3 vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) uncrewed aircraft system with a ducted-fan design, more than 12 hours of endurance, and a heavy-fuel engine. It is actively operating at sea and from land-based sites with the U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Marine Corps, including deployments from Navy ships. Designed for contested electronic warfare environments, V-BAT’s single-engine, enclosed-rotor configuration enables safe, unassisted launch and recovery from ship decks and austere locations, supporting persistent ISR with a small, highly expeditionary footprint and minimal logistics requirements.

## SCALING AUTONOMOUS SURFACE VESSELS WITH THE WORLD'S BEST SHIP BUILDERS FOR US NAVY



Anduril and HD Hyundai announced plans to design and produce a new class of Autonomous Surface Vessels (ASV) that combines HD Hyundai's legacy in shipbuilding with Anduril's speed-to-market, software-defined autonomy and mission systems integration expertise. Today, that ship is in production, and Anduril is on a path to bring the expertise of the world's best shipbuilders to the US Navy.

The strategic calculus driving this collaboration has only come into sharper focus. China continues to outbuild the U.S. Navy at a rate of three to one, while Russia contests Western access to the Arctic and the Black Sea. Defending commercial shipping and maintaining sea control with exquisite manned platforms carries an untenable price tag, and it simply is no longer realistic.

The Navy's solution to this problem is the Medium Unmanned Surface Vessel (MUSV) program, an effort focused on building a distributed, autonomous surface fleet that will enable coordinated operations in contested environments on the timelines, budgets, and scales required to deter the threat. Anduril is ready to compete on MUSV with the best shipbuilding partners in the world.

**What We've Been Building :** Our partnership with HD Hyundai is on track. We selected HD Hyundai for their proven reputation as one of the world's foremost shipbuilders and their ability to move from design to production quickly; HD Hyundai has delivered over 5000 vessels globally. Following the successful completion of our critical design review, construction on our first ASV is underway, and the ship is on track to be in the water and tested by the end of this year. While the first hull takes shape in Korea, Anduril has been conducting daily at-sea testing of vehicle autonomy, mission autonomy, and containerized payloads on a surrogate vessel — accumulating open-water operational data that will transfer directly to the first production hull upon delivery. This testing will be instrumental in moving from production to operations of our first vessel.

The US Navy has been clear: scale is what matters. A single autonomous ship doesn't move the needle. We're working with a team of commercial shipbuilding all-stars with the capacity and expertise required to deliver for the US Navy's MUSV program. Commercial shipbuilders are essential to this effort because they already operate at scale, producing large numbers of reliable vessels efficiently, on time, and on a disciplined budget. Hyundai's global shipbuilding capacity and deep technical expertise are central to this approach, which is why we partnered with them. HD Hyundai will construct the ASV at HD Hyundai Heavy Industries' shipyard in Ulsan and provide key AI solutions for the vessel, including autonomous navigation technology. Avikus, HD Hyundai's subsidiary specializing in autonomous navigation, has supplied autonomous navigation solutions to approximately 500 large vessels to date, establishing itself as a leader in the global maritime autonomy market.

**The Fleet Takes Shape :** Anduril is establishing the production infrastructure to build and sustain a fleet at scale. In the United States, Anduril is partnering with Edison Chouest Offshore, one of the most experienced shipbuilders in the country, to produce ASVs at Edison Chouest U.S. shipyards — leveraging ECO's multi-billion-dollar domestic infrastructure and workforce of over 6,000 shipyard employees.

## TEXTRON SYSTEMS AWARDED CONTRACT FROM DIU TO PROVIDE TSUNAMI USVs TO SOUTHCOM AND US NAVY FOURTH FLEET



Textron Systems Corporation, a Textron Inc. company, announced a contract award from the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) to produce and deliver multiple TSUNAMI® Uncrewed Surface Vessels (USVs), which will be used to support the U.S. Navy Fleet Experimentation (FLEX) exercise in Key West, Florida and provide three months of joint operations with SOUTHCOM and the U.S. Navy Fourth Fleet.

Under the contract, Textron Systems will provide the long dwell TSUNAMI interceptor USVs and Field Service Representatives (FSRs) to the FLEX exercise, demonstrating cooperative intelligence, surveillance reconnaissance and targeting (ISR-T) with its Aerosonde® 4.7 VTOL UAS off a Littoral Combat Ship (LCS). The exercise will also demonstrate manned-unmanned surface warfare with Invariant Corporation's Surface-to-Air Kinetic Engagement (STAKE) system.

The TSUNAMI family of autonomous maritime surface vessels are designed to meet the needs of the U.S. Navy and its allies for a readily available, versatile portfolio of multi-mission uncrewed assets to team effectively across the fleet. Utilizing Brunswick Corporation's reliable, high-performance vessels, Textron Systems developed the TSUNAMI family of products with its trusted CUSV® - Common Unmanned Surface Vehicle - vessel-based autonomy control system, leveraging mature commercial technologies to deliver increased capacity and immediate scale.

"The TSUNAMI family of vehicles leverage Textron Systems' decades of expertise in autonomous systems innovation, coupled with the speed and scalability of Brunswick Corporation's established and globally sustainable production line of vessels," said Ryan Schaffernocker, Senior Vice President Air, Land and Sea Systems. "This award establishes a partnership foundation for TSUNAMI USV government-owned, contractor-operated (GOCO) and contractor-owned, contractor-operated (COCO) services, allowing for rapid deployment with a lower cost of ownership for the Navy."

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. Most recently, Textron Systems introduced the Multi Mission USV (MMUSV), the 5th generation of its CUSV craft designed to expand the Navy's capacity for advanced mission capabilities.

## TEXTRON SYSTEMS AND HOWE & HOWE DEBUT RIPSАWТM M1 UGV TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATOR



**T**extron Systems Corporation, a Textron Inc. company, and its subsidiary Howe & Howe Inc., today debuted the RIPSАWТM M1 uncrewed ground vehicle (UGV) technology demonstrator at the 2026 Modern Day Marine exposition. The M1 UGV is designed to support U.S. Marine Corps missions of littoral mobility and uncrewed teaming concept of operations (CONOPS).

The M1 technology demonstrator is the next iteration in the company's Modular Open Systems Approach (MOSA)-designed UGVs, demonstrating the capacity and capability to scale our family of UGVs. The technology demonstrator is the first variant in the M1 line of vehicles, designed as a robotic force multiplier for the Advanced Reconnaissance Vehicle (ARV) and Amphibious Combat Vehicle (ACV) to support Force Design 2030.

The UGV can support target missions including hard kill counter-unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) and reconnaissance, surveillance and target acquisition (RSTA). It can also serve as a loitering munition launch platform. The vehicle is envisioned to extend the reach and lethality of the Marines' existing systems to keep personnel out of harm's way and protect heavier, and more expensive, ground vehicles.

"The M1 technology demonstrator shows the art of the possible for how UGVs can support the Marine Corps' missions," said Vice President of Programs, Sara Willett. "Along with Howe & Howe, we took our experience in autonomous robotic systems across land, air and sea - the same domains the Marine Corps' missions live - to develop this system that demonstrates our ability to scale the SWAP up or down, all while maintaining the common robotic core that enables our UGVs to provide exceptional transportability and battlefield agility."

With decades of uncrewed systems leadership and millions of operational hours across domains, Textron Systems continues to draw on its deep experience to deliver reliable, mission-ready innovation. With a commitment to advancing modular, autonomous technologies that strengthen warfighter effectiveness, Textron Systems continues to shape the future of uncrewed ground operations.

## EOS R400 DEMONSTRATED ON USV, EXTENDING INTO MARITIME OPERATIONS



**E**OS has demonstrated its R400 Remote Weapon System integrated onto an unmanned surface vessel developed by BlackSea Technologies. The vessel, Chaser, was unveiled at Sea-Air-Space 2026 in the United States.

EOS Defense Systems USA is a mission partner on the USV, providing the gun system as part of the vessel's configuration, alongside partners including Lockheed Martin (JAGM launcher), Echodyne (radars) and Current (perception camera systems).

This integration demonstrates how rapidly EOS' R400 can be adapted to new platforms, moving from concept to live maritime demonstration in a matter of weeks.

It brings together remote operation, over satellite communications, maritime integration and autonomous deployment into a single, working capability, combining elements previously demonstrated separately onto one platform. It also highlights the versatility of the R400 across multiple domains, extending its application into maritime and autonomous operations.

As the first time R400 has been deployed on an unmanned surface vessel in the US, it creates a new pathway for engagement with US Navy stakeholders, reflecting growing demand for these capabilities.

The demonstration is expected to support further testing and operational assessment activities.

## HII BUILDS ON MANNED-UNMANNED SUBMARINE TEAMING SUCCESS WITH NEW PENTAGON DEAL POISED TO TRANSFORM UNDERSEA WARFARE



**H**II, a global leader in unmanned and autonomous maritime platforms, has been awarded a contract by the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) to deliver a submarine Torpedo Tube Launch and Recovery (TTLR) system. The system is designed to autonomously deploy and recover HII's REMUS unmanned underwater vehicle (UUV) from U.S. Navy submarines.

The DIU contract builds on HII's 120-year leadership in undersea warfare as one of two builders of U.S. nuclear-powered submarines, as well as the world's largest producer of UUVs, and on a series of recent milestone achievements in manned-unmanned teaming. HII is advancing fully integrated, autonomous maritime capabilities that expand the reach and enhance the effectiveness of the U.S. Navy and its allies.

"This contract award reflects HII's 25-year leadership in advancing autonomous unmanned maritime platforms and integrating them into submarine operations," said Duane Fotheringham, president of the Unmanned Systems group in HII's Mission Technologies division. "There is no company with more expertise in both the manned and unmanned sides of teamed operations. We look forward to continuing our strong partnership with the U.S. Navy to deliver the innovative solutions our forces urgently need in the subsea domain."

To date, HII has delivered more than 750 REMUS vehicles to over 30 countries, including 14 NATO members. More than 90% of those systems remain in service after more than two decades, underscoring their durability, reliability, and long-term lifecycle value.

In June 2025, the U.S. Navy and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) successfully advanced the ongoing Yellow Moray UUV capability, marking the first forward-deployed torpedo tube launch and recovery of an HII-built REMUS 600 UUV from the USS Delaware (SSN 791), a Virginia-class submarine constructed by HII. Delaware and an embarked unmanned undersea vehicle squadron (UUVRON-1) cadre, with WHOI support, conducted overseas operations that included three fully autonomous launch and recovery sorties conducted through the submarine's torpedo tube without diver assistance.

This demonstration represented a significant operational advancement in the autonomous teaming of manned and unmanned systems for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), as well as broader maritime missions.

In July 2025, a joint team from HII, WHOI and the U.S. Navy's Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division Newport completed the first recovery of the latest generation REMUS 620 into a Virginia-class submarine torpedo tube and shutterway test fixture at Seneca Lake, New York.

During in-water testing, the REMUS 620 demonstrated advanced autonomous navigation and communication capabilities. The vehicle successfully docked with a shock and fire enclosure capsule (SAFECAP) within a submerged torpedo tube test fixture and executed reverse swim-out launch and safe separation procedures — validating critical operational functions for future deployment.

These advancements reinforce HII's role as a leading sea power company and a key innovator in manned-unmanned teaming across two core growth areas: nuclear-powered submarine design and construction, and autonomous unmanned systems. Integrating UUVs through standard submarine interfaces extends mission reach, enhances stealth, and reduces operational risk and crew burden.

## ROLLS-ROYCE POWERS UNMANNED US NAVY MQ-25A TO SUCCESSFUL 1ST FLIGHT



**R**olls-Royce powered the first flight of the U.S. Navy MQ-25A Stingray™ on April 25, marking a pivotal program milestone that moves the unmanned platform closer to a Milestone C decision and aircraft carrier integration testing.

A single AE 3007N engine, part of the proven and reliable Rolls-Royce AE engine family, powers the Stingray, whose refueling capabilities will significantly extend the strike distance of the Carrier Air Wing (CVW) while allowing Carrier Strike Groups (CSG) to operate at a greater distance from threats.

The Rolls-Royce powered MQ-25A will keep service members safer and directly support credible maritime domain security and awareness capabilities, a key focus of the National Defense Strategy.

While its primary role is aerial refueling, the MQ-25A is also equipped for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions. The high-bypass-ratio (5:1) architecture of the AE 3007N demonstrates a low specific fuel consumption (SFC) value that is a key enabler for these types of long-endurance missions.

During its two-hour first flight, the Stingray autonomously executed a digitally programmed mission plan including taxi, take-off, flight maneuvers and landing. The flight further validated the seamless integration of the AE 3007N engine and the aircraft, as well as the Unmanned Carrier Aviation Mission Control System MD-5 ground control station that links the entire platform.

The Rolls-Royce AE 3007N engine was integral to the successful first flight of the MQ-25A Stingray, which will greatly enhance the range and capability of the U.S. Carrier Air Wing. We are honored the U.S. Navy has, once again, put its trust in our proven, reliable family of high-performance AE engines for this critical new unmanned platform. We continue to work closely with the U.S. Navy and Boeing to make the MQ-25A a reality for our service members, giving them a key strategic advantage in contested environments."

Rolls-Royce expects to deliver four more AE 3007N engines to Boeing in 2026 to support production spares. The overall program of record for the MQ-25A Stingray covers 76 aircraft (plus spare engines).

In all, AE engines power 16 different commercial and military platforms worldwide. More than 7,500 American-made AE engines have been delivered, amassing over 90 million flight hours.

**KRAKEN ROBOTICS DEMOS KATFISH AUTONOMOUS LAUNCH AND RECOVERY FROM SEFINE USV**



**K** raken Robotics Inc. announces the successful integration and demonstration of its KATFISH towed synthetic aperture sonar and autonomous launch and recovery system (LARS) from SEFINE’s RD-22 unmanned surface vessel (USV) in coordination with SEFINE SISAM (Strategic Unmanned Systems Research Center). The demonstration took place in Q1 2026 off the coast of Istanbul, Türkiye.

“Recent developments underscore the importance of safeguarding critical maritime transit routes and underwater infrastructure, and autonomous mine countermeasure capabilities like KATFISH can play an important role in helping navies efficiently detect and classify mine-like objects,” said Bernard Mills, Executive Vice President, Defence at Kraken Robotics. “By combining SEFINE’s multi-role USV with Kraken’s cutting-edge KATFISH and USV LARS, navies can deploy advanced technologies faster and more efficiently, strengthening defence and maritime security in increasingly complex environments.”

The demonstration focused on rapid detection and classification of mine-like objects and critical underwater infrastructure and was attended by several navies and government organizations. KATFISH delivered 3 cm x 3 cm resolution data at a range of 200 meters per side which was live streamed to a command center onshore, enabling real-time classification of contacts by operators with SEFINE SISAM’s mission planning software.

The same KATFISH and USV LARS were demonstrated from a UK Royal Navy in-service 11-meter ARCIMS USV in November 2025. These joint integrations mark a major step forward in delivering agile, modular, and cost-effective mine countermeasure capabilities for modern naval operations.

**SCHIEBEL COMPLETES 1ST CAMCOPTER S-100 ACCEPTANCE MILESTONE FOR HELLENIC NAVY FDI FRIGATES**

**F** ollowing the contract signing on 13 February 2026 for four CAMCOPTER® S-100 Unmanned Air Systems (UAS) for the Hellenic Navy’s new Frégate de Défense et d’Intervention (FDI) frigates, Schiebel and the Hellenic Navy have successfully completed the acceptance tests of the first two systems.

Over the course of one week at Kotroni Helicopter Base, the initial two CAMCOPTER® S-100 systems, comprising four Unmanned Air Vehicles (UAVs), underwent functional testing, successfully completing the acceptance campaign and confirming their readiness for operational use.

Equipped with L3 Harris MX-10 EO/IR and Overwatch Imaging PT-8DN Oceanwatch, the CAMCOPTER® S-100 will provide the Hellenic Navy with enhanced capability across missions including maritime security, search and rescue, environmental monitoring and exclusive economic zone (EEZ) control.

“This milestone marks an important step in the introduction of the CAMCOPTER® S-100 with the Hellenic Navy,” said Hans Georg Schiebel, Chairman of the Schiebel Group. “The successful acceptance campaign highlights the effective collaboration between Schiebel and the Hellenic Navy, paving the way for operational deployment.”

**LEONARDO DRS LAUNCHES NEW MARITIME COUNTER-UAS CAPABILITY TO DEFEAT AERIAL UNMANNED THREATS AT SEA**



**L** eonardo DRS, Inc. announced it has successfully integrated its Maritime Mission Equipment Package (M-MEP) on an autonomous unmanned surface vessel (AUSV), delivering a new counter-unmanned aerial system (C-UAS) capability designed to detect, track, identify, and defeat aerial unmanned threats operating in the maritime domain. Built for rapid integration on crewed and uncrewed platforms, the solution provides a mission-ready layer of protection for ships, ports, littoral infrastructure, and expeditionary forces facing an increasingly complex drone threat environment.

“Aerial unmanned threats are evolving quickly – in range, autonomy, and numbers,” said Cari Ossenfort, senior vice president and general manager of the Leonardo DRS Naval Electronics business unit. “The M-MEP is engineered to help the U.S. Navy and allied forces stay ahead of that threat with a modular package that brings sensors, command and control, and defeat options together into one integrated capability that can be fielded fast.”

From small commercial quadcopters to more capable long-range UAS, unmanned aerial threats now represent a persistent risk to maritime operations. The M-MEP is designed to compress the time from requirement to operational capability by packaging detection through defeat into a single, scalable system that can be adapted across a range of maritime platforms – including uncrewed surface vessels – USVs.

The M-MEP combines maritime radar and EO-IR sensors with integrated networking, the SAGEcore™ software platform for AI-enabled sensor fusion and command and control, and a platform integration kit that accelerates installation across multiple vessel types.

Leonardo DRS will showcase the M-MEP integrated onto the Sea Machines STORMRUNNER AUSV at the Navy League Sea-Air-Space Symposium. Attendees are invited to visit Leonardo DRS outside the exhibition hall at Dock 9 to learn how the system can help the U.S. Navy to detect, identify, track, and defeat aerial unmanned threats faster with rapidly fieldable, modular, interoperable C-UAS protection that boosts maritime domain awareness, reduces operator workload, and extends layered defense to ships and USVs.

## TKMS AND THE GERMAN AEROSPACE CENTER (DLR) ARE EXPANDING THEIR STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP TO PROTECT CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE



**T**KMS and the German Aerospace Center (DLR) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to deepen and systematically expand their existing collaboration. The goal is to combine their respective extensive expertise for joint research and development activities and to create synergies.

The collaboration focuses, among other things, on the protection of critical maritime infrastructure, quantum technology, ship technologies, as well as simulation and systems engineering.

Jeronimo Dzaack, Senior Vice President of Ocean X, explains: "With this memorandum of understanding, TKMS is strengthening its strategic and goal-oriented partnership with the DLR. Together, we can combine our strengths and develop innovative security and communication solutions to shape the maritime ecosystem of the future."

A key project is the model-based establishment of a seamless network from space to the seabed. This is intended to close existing gaps—such as in remote or hard-to-reach areas—in the future and enable a reliable situational picture in real time.

Another focus is on the protection of critical maritime infrastructure. As part of the collaboration, vehicles such as the SeaCat autonomous underwater drone—developed by TKMS and its TKMS ATLAS ELEKTRONIK segment—will also be deployed. The drone delivers high-resolution underwater situational imagery, thereby supporting the creation of robust maritime situational awareness.

"The challenges we face in the maritime sector, particularly with regard to resilient infrastructure, are complex and interdisciplinary. They can only be overcome through strategic cooperation between industry and research. A comprehensive exchange of knowledge is the foundation of our shared success," emphasizes Frank Sill Torres, Head of the DLR Institute for the Protection of Maritime Infrastructures.

With the signed memorandum of understanding, TKMS and DLR are laying the foundation for long-term, interdisciplinary cooperation.

## EXAIL'S DRIX H-9 SELECTED FOR COUNTER-UAS RESEARCH BY LEADING DEFENSE ORGANIZATION



**E**xail has secured a new contract for its long-range Uncrewed Surface Vehicle (USV), the Drix H-9, with a leading defense research organization. This is the second Drix H-9 order in just a few months for defense application, confirming the growing momentum of Exail's USV solutions in the defense sector.

The Drix H-9, delivered by Exail, will be equipped by the customer for Counter-Unmanned Aerial System (CUAS) missions, integrating advanced sensors technologies to detect, track, and mitigate aerial threats. The system will leverage proven CUAS technology initially developed for land platforms and now adapted for the maritime domain.

With this new contract, Exail continues to expand the operational versatility of the Drix Series, further demonstrating its ability to serve both commercial and defense applications, from hydrography to maritime security and domain awareness.

Building on the proven capabilities of the Drix platform, the H-9 combines long range autonomy high payload capacity, and modular design — enabling rapid integration of new mission systems to support emerging naval and multi-domain operations.

"This new contract illustrates how Exail's uncrewed surface vessels are becoming key enablers for future defense concepts. By adapting the Drix Series to new missions such as CUAS, we're demonstrating how uncrewed systems can enhance operational agility and resilience across all domains," said Marine Slingue, President of Exail Defense Systems Inc

## FRENCH NAVY FURTHER EXPANDS CAMCOPTER S-100 FLEET



The French Navy, through the French Government defence procurement and technology agency (Direction Générale de l'Armement, DGA) and Naval Group, has ordered five additional CAMCOPTER® S-100 systems under the Navy's unmanned aviation programme. Naval Group, as prime contractor and lead system integrator, will deploy and integrate the systems on the Frégates Européennes Multi-Mission (FREMM) including mission management through the Steeris® MS system.

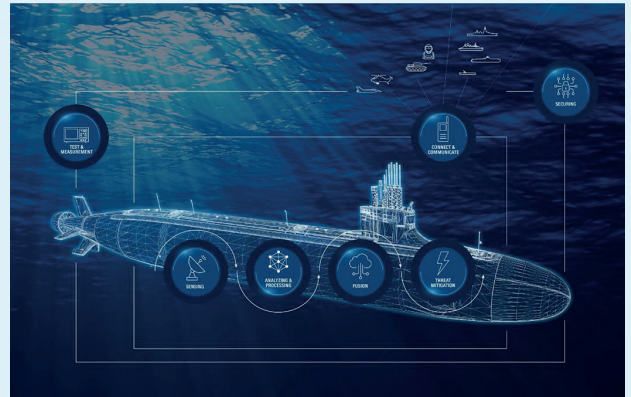
Each system consists of two CAMCOPTER® S-100 Unmanned Air Vehicles (UAV), increasing the French Navy's total fleet to eight S-100 systems, once deliveries are completed. The systems will be delivered progressively, starting 2026.

The French Navy has operated and deployed the CAMCOPTER® S-100 globally at sea since 2012, when the system was first fully integrated aboard the Gowind-class L'Adroit Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV). In 2019, it was integrated on the Mistral-class amphibious helicopter carrier Dixmude, marking the first operational integration of a rotary-wing Unmanned Air System (UAS) into a European naval Combat Management System (CMS). In 2020, the French Navy expanded its capability with the acquisition of two additional S-100 systems, deployed aboard the Mistral and Tonnerre.

The CAMCOPTER® S-100 provides maritime Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities and is operated from naval vessels without the need for launch or recovery equipment. Its compact footprint and proven shipborne performance enable flexible deployment across a wide range of missions, and different classes of ships.

"The French Navy was among the first European naval forces to operationally integrate the CAMCOPTER® S-100 into its shipborne operations. This follow-on order reflects the system's capabilities, as well as maturity and the confidence placed in its performance at sea. We are proud to continue supporting the French Navy with a proven and operationally deployed VTOL UAS," said Lubos Sramek, Director of Schiebel Aéronaval SAS in Toulon.

## ROHDE & SCHWARZ TRANSFORMS SUBMARINE COMMUNICATIONS FOR REAL-TIME UNDERWATER DOMINANCE AT UDT 2026



The undersea domain is rapidly becoming the decisive battleground for modern naval forces. Emerging sensors, autonomous underwater platforms and increasingly sophisticated antisubmarine threats demand that submarines be equipped with continuous, lowlatency, and secure connectivity, as well as automated datalink capabilities that turn raw sensor feeds into actionable intelligence in real time.

The Rohde & Schwarz team is available to discuss its unique portfolio with integrator and end-users at the Underwater Defence Technology (UDT) Conference, April 14 - 16, 2026 in London. The event's 2026 theme, "Prepare Today for the Maritime Threats of Tomorrow," provides an ideal platform to demonstrate how secure, elective automated and interoperable subsea communications is contributing to modern naval operations. Attendees will be able to see demonstrations of the company's endtoend system architecture, from wavegeneration to Aldriven data orchestration, and will learn how the technology can be adapted to a wide range of platforms, from legacy dieselelectric submarines to nextgeneration airindependent propulsion (AIP) vessels.

Traditional submarine communications have long been limited by narrow bandwidth, high latency and vulnerability to hostile environments. Rohde & Schwarz' new waveform family, built on a flexible, softwaredefined core, provides secure, highthroughput links that remain operational under extreme conditions providing low probability of detection and low probability of interception. The technology delivers interoperable connectivity not only between fleet assets but also with shorebased command centers, allied platforms and uncrewed underwater vehicles, ensuring that commanders retain a realtime picture of the battlespace.

Recognizing that undersea threats will continue to evolve, Rohde & Schwarz has designed the architecture to be fully modular and softwaredefined. In the future, new waveforms, encryption standards, or analytics algorithms can be introduced via overtheair updates, preserving investment while keeping the fleet ahead of the curve. This scalability also enables rapid integration of emerging technologies such as quantumsecure links and nextgeneration lowfrequency acoustic modems.

## LEIDOS, HAVOC INTEGRATE CAPABILITIES TO ADVANCE MARITIME AND AIR AUTONOMY



Leidos “The future of warfare will be defined by how quickly and effectively systems can operate together across domains,” said Leidos Defense President Cindy Gruensfelder. “The Leidos and Havoc team will work to deliver integrated, mission-ready capability that gives commanders more options and operational advantage.”

“Leidos is a strong partner because their vessels and software are proven and trusted,” said Paul Lwin, Co-founder and CEO of Havoc. “By integrating Havoc’s autonomy across those platforms, we expect to compress integration timelines from months to weeks and move systems into production in days, not months. That speed, applied to Leidos’ breadth of platforms, is what makes this partnership so significant for defense customers.”

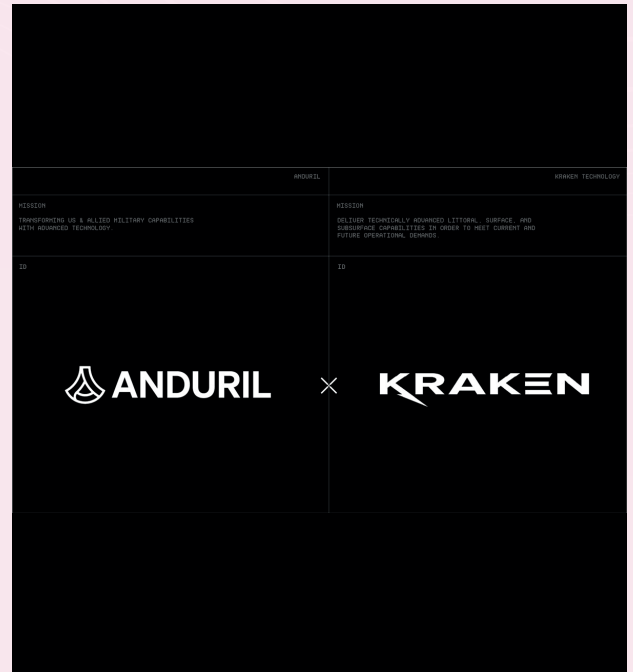
This partnership combines Leidos’ proven maritime platforms and systems integration expertise with Havoc’s collaborative autonomy capabilities. Depending on the mission, solutions will incorporate Leidos, Havoc, or a combination of both software architectures to deliver scalable capability across existing and future force structures. These systems are designed to operate together to help expand reach, improve coordination and reduce risk to human operators.

and Havoc are partnering to integrate unmanned systems with collaborative autonomy technology, enabling a single operator to command and coordinate fleets of platforms across vast, contested areas.

The companies plan to showcase these capabilities during a operational validation in the fourth quarter of 2026, where unmanned surface and aerial vehicles are expected to operate under a single autonomy system. The event is intended to provide a clear preview of how collaborative autonomous operations can be executed at scale in real-world conditions.

Elements of Havoc’s collaborative autonomy software will be integrated with Leidos’ Autonomous Vessel Architecture (LAVA) on select platforms, beginning with Sea Archer, the small unmanned surface vessel. This combined approach is designed to enable coordinated operations across systems while seeking to optimize performance, integration speed and cost for specific mission applications. The collaboration aims to define and deliver the architecture for an autonomous battlespace, where distributed systems sense, decide and act together across air, surface and sub-surface domains, even in contested and communications-degraded environments.

## ANDURIL PARTNERS WITH KRAKEN TECHNOLOGY GROUP ON SMALL USVS



Recent conflicts have rewritten the rules of naval warfare. Affordable, scalable unmanned systems now decide outcomes – and the U.S. Navy needs small USVs that carry flexible payloads exceeding 1,000 lbs, sustain extended operations, and roll off production lines fast. Current domestic offerings fall short. As Navy Secretary John Phelan told the Senate Armed Services Committee: “We will not win the wars of the future with the platforms of the past. Success in modern warfare will require the rapid, scalable production and integration of air, surface, and subsurface unmanned systems.”

Kraken Technology Group builds the answer. Anduril is partnering with Kraken to bring Kraken’s proven family of small, high-performance, mass-producible USVs to the U.S. Navy. Kraken’s USVs offer uniquely high performance. With a heritage rooted in competitive offshore racing, Kraken’s USVs have set the standard for speed and endurance at sea. They have already proven that performance under the UK’s Project Beehive program, where it emerged as the small USV leader for European and partner nation customers.

Anduril and Kraken are joining forces to deliver a family of small unmanned surface vehicles to the U.S. Navy. Anduril will build the K5 KRAKEN and K7 SABRE at U.S. facilities, and sustain and support the fleet. Anduril will integrate payloads and Lattice autonomy software on U.S. soil, configuring each vessel for the full range of Navy missions. To meet allied demand, Kraken will continue a parallel production line, designing a distinct hull variant for allied operational requirements.

Dominance at sea requires scale. Kraken’s platform expertise plus Anduril’s autonomy and domestic manufacturing deliver it.

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Fly safer. Fly longer. Fly smarter  
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## Key Benefits of Advertising in Drones World



### Market Leadership

- Recognized as the industry's most authoritative publication
- Read by decision-makers across the drone ecosystem
- Strong relationships with key industry players and regulators



### Content Quality

- Award-winning editorial team with deep industry expertise
- Technical accuracy validated by industry experts
- Balanced coverage of commercial, defense, and consumer sectors



### Digital Integration

- Seamless print-to-digital reader experience
- Search engine optimization for extended reach
- Social media amplification across professional networks



### ROI Focus

- Lead generation through integrated contact forms
- Performance tracking and analytics
- Content repurposing rights for your marketing materials



### Add-On Opportunities

- Sponsored newsletter placement.
- Product review section (trusted by our readers).
- Event coverage (airshows, defence expos, trade fairs).
- Long-term branding bundles (quarterly/yearly discounts).

# COMMERCIAL UAV EXPO

SEPTEMBER 1-3, 2026

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