

# Airbus, Shield AI Partner to Integrate Autonomy on Unmanned Aerial Logistics Connector



From Airbus U.S. Space & Defense and Shield AI

WASHINGTON (April 30, 2025) – Airbus U.S. Space & Defense and Shield AI announced a teaming agreement to integrate Shield

AI's Hivemind autonomy software on the Airbus MQ-72C Logistics Connector, an unmanned variant of the UH-72 Lakota. The collaboration will expand the platform's mission capabilities through autonomy-enabled operations across a wide range of logistics and operational scenarios—including those under the U.S. Marine Corps' Aerial Logistics Connector (ALC) program.

Under the agreement, Airbus U.S. Space & Defense and Shield AI will test Hivemind autonomy in collaboration with Airbus' Helionix, advancing the future autonomous mission capabilities of the Marine Corps. The level of autonomy will be scaled during future test activities and demonstrations, ultimately leading to unmanned operations in contested logistics environments.

"The Lakota is a proven multi-mission platform that is ready to support unmanned operations in austere environments," said Robert Geckle, Chairman and CEO of Airbus U.S. Space & Defense. "Pairing our aircraft with next-generation autonomy software opens new mission possibilities for the warfighter and allied forces worldwide."

The effort will continue to evolve missionization over the next several years, ultimately enabling more advanced levels of autonomous flight across the Marine Corps and broader Joint Force.

"Airbus is a world-class partner with a strong track record of delivering reliable systems for the warfighter," said Ryan Tseng, CEO of Shield AI. "The Lakota has been a mainstay of military aviation for years—a widely-fielded, trusted platform used across a range of missions. Integrating Hivemind onto this aircraft shows how autonomy can rapidly enhance proven systems to meet the demands of today's missions, and it's a key step toward fully autonomous, uncrewed logistics operations that are scalable, resilient, and built for the future fight."

The Airbus U.S. team is entering 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.

The Aerial Logistics Connector effort is one of several efforts across the Department of Defense to deliver logistical support in distributed environments during peer or near peer conflicts.

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## **NDIA, Navy TPP Team to Grow Next-Gen Shipyard Talent**

From the National Defense Industrial Association, April 29, 2025

ARLINGTON, Va. – The National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA) is expanding its partnership with the U.S. Navy's Talent Pipeline Program (TPP) to enhance talent acquisition, training, and retention across the U.S. Navy defense industrial base (DIB). According to NDIA's *Vital Signs 2025* report, critical components of the U.S. DIB, particularly skilled trade positions, have significantly declined over recent decades. The TPP is actively reversing this trend by training, coaching, encouraging, and recognizing small and medium-sized companies to improve their Talent Acquisition and Retention systems of recruiting, training, and retaining productive and engaged workers crucial to maintaining naval supremacy.

Following a successful pilot collaboration with NDIA's

Delaware Valley Chapter, NDIA and TPP aim to broaden their engagement with Chapters across the country. The Chapters will play a critical role in expanding the reach and impact of the program.

“This partnership is vital to rebuilding our defense industrial base,” said NDIA President and CEO David Norquist. “By connecting our member companies with the Navy’s Talent Pipeline Program, we’re helping secure the skilled workforce needed for shipbuilding and strengthening both our industry and national security.”

Inspired by the shared mission, Joe Barto, program leader of the U.S. Navy Talent Pipeline Program, said he’s honored to have NDIA on the TPP team, adding: “Partnerships with national facilitators like NDIA are vital to the Talent Pipeline Program’s national rollout. Their support validates the Navy’s investment in small and medium-sized manufacturers—the backbone of American industry and the majority of NDIA’s membership. By joining the movement alongside more than 450 employers, NDIA is helping ensure companies have the talent they need to build high-performing teams.”

The Talent Pipeline Program directly addresses the U.S. Navy’s growing manufacturing production requirements by ensuring a steady pipeline of skilled talent to deliver and sustain Columbia and Virginia-class submarines, aircraft carriers, surface combatants, and vessels currently in service. This expanded initiative will reinforce U.S. naval capabilities and fortify national security in an increasingly complex global environment.

Learn more about the Talent Pipeline Program at <https://dibtalentpipeline.com/> and take the TPP Realistic Program Preview at <https://youtu.be/qH6Cuffyo2o>

Read NDIA’s “Vital Signs 2025” here: <https://www.ndia.org/policy/publications/vital-signs>

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# Acting CNO Strengthens Relations With Industrial Base at Manufacturing Summit



Acting Chief of Naval Operations Adm. James Kilby tours training centers during the Accelerated Training in Defense Manufacturing (ATDM) Summit at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR), Danville, Virginia, April 29, 2025. (U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Vanessa White)

From the Navy Office of Information, April 30, 2025

Acting Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jim Kilby attended the Accelerated Training in Defense Manufacturing (ATDM) Summit at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR) in Danville, Virginia, April 29.

The visit demonstrates the Navy's commitment to strengthen integration with the industrial base to maintain and modernize shipbuilding and develop and field new capabilities.

Kilby delivered the keynote address at the summit and stressed the importance of partnering with industry and harnessing innovation in the maritime industrial base to deliver and support a lethal naval force.

"I can assure you that ATDM is contributing to a national movement that is making America stronger, safer, and more secure," said Kilby. "The work you're doing matters to our military, our economy, and the future of this country."

Kilby discussed key shipbuilding and maintenance initiatives, including fielding new capabilities such as additive manufacturing.

"In our shipyards, in our manufacturing plants, and in our support organizations, we are reducing maintenance delays, and we are moving faster," said Kilby. "Every time we 3D-print a part that would otherwise take 40 weeks to procure, we are putting more capability back into the field. That is real, measurable readiness."

While at the institute, Kilby also met with industry leaders from Austal USA and toured the National Training Center and the Center for Manufacturing Advancement to review initiatives that include industrial automation, robotics, artificial intelligence and digital technologies.

ATDM was established under the direction of the Navy's Maritime Industrial Base Program to train the future workforce and operationalize an innovation hub for advanced manufacturing.

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# Hanwha Philly Shipyard CEO Praises Introduction of SHIPS for America Act

From Hanwha Philly Shipyard

WASHINGTON, April 30, 2025 – Today, U.S. Sens. Mark Kelly (D-Arizona) and Todd Young (R-Indiana) alongside U.S. Reps. Trent Kelly (R-Mississippi) and John Garamendi (D-California) reintroduced the [SHIPS for America Act](#), bipartisan legislation aimed at strengthening the U.S. maritime industry in response to urgent shipbuilding needs.

As part of today's announcement, Hanwha Philly Shipyard Chief Executive Officer David Kim issued the following statement:

"Hanwha recognizes and commends U.S. Senators Mark Kelly and Todd Young and Congressmen Trent Kelly and John Garamendi for their maritime policy leadership in reintroducing the bipartisan SHIPS for America Act. This bill offers tangible incentives to the domestic maritime industry with the goal of expanding the U.S.-flagged ocean-going fleet. It supports a major recapitalization of the shipbuilding infrastructure in the U.S., provides substantial incentives for the purchase of U.S.-built commercial vessels, and supports the national security and naval shipbuilding goals of the U.S. Hanwha sees tremendous value in this legislation and believes it would have a long-term positive impact on Hanwha Philly Shipyard, other shipbuilders in the U.S. and Hanwha's investments in America's shipping industry and maritime industrial base."

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# HII Launching “Build It: In America, For America” Ads Celebrating U.S.-Based Manufacturing Work



[From HII](#)

NEWPORT NEWS, Va., April 30, 2025 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) – HII (NYSE: HII), America’s largest military shipbuilder, is launching a series of 15-second television advertisements as part of its nationwide “Build It” campaign.

The video advertisements, along with the broader “Build It” campaign, celebrate the crucial manufacturing work performed in the U.S. to build and deliver platforms and technologies in support of the national defense. These include American-built U.S. Navy ships and submarines, as well as uncrewed underwater

vehicles, technologies, and networks built and integrated by HII to connect and enable today's all-domain joint force.

“‘Build It’ is a call to action to support the important work of building, in support of our national security,” HII President and CEO Chris Kastner said. “It’s hard work and deserves respect. Ultimately it helps to protect us and our families. This campaign recognizes the ongoing value and contributions of those who build careers out of building our national defense.”

The ads feature actual shipbuilders, engineers and technologists who’ve worked for HII and who provide commentary in their own words. HII is the largest industrial employer in the commonwealth of Virginia, and in the state of Mississippi.

The “Build It” campaign supports revitalizing American manufacturing and strengthening the defense industrial base to meet the urgent, increased demand for ships and technologies by the U.S. Navy and the nation.

A playlist of the video advertisements can be found at: <http://hii.com/news/hii-launching-new-build-it-in-america-for-america-ads-celebrating-u-s-based-manufacturing-work-and-workforce/>.

In addition to recruiting motivated talent to shipbuilding, HII is actively developing the next generation of skilled professionals through its apprenticeship programs offered in each of its three divisions. These programs offer a rigorous multi-year curriculum that combines hands-on training, academic coursework and real-world experience.

The HII apprentice schools give students a direct path to skilled careers and long-term growth in the shipbuilding industry. By blending tradition with advanced technology, HII is not just filling jobs – it’s developing leaders and investing in the future of the American workforce.

This “Build It” campaign can be found across HII digital outreach and social media and through educational partnerships to bring the message directly to the next generation of American builders.

HII is hiring at all experience levels, offering paid training, competitive wages, long-term careers, and a strong sense of purpose. Jobs are available across three divisions:

- **Newport News Shipbuilding** in Virginia, builder of nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and submarines for the U.S. Navy.
- **Ingalls Shipbuilding** in Mississippi, builder of amphibious ships and destroyers for the U.S. Navy.
- **Mission Technologies** in Virginia, provider of digital defense and national security solutions, and the largest producer of unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs).

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## **GA-ASI Delivers MQ-9A Block 5 Extended-Range UAS To USMC**



### *New UAS Delivered to VMX-1*

From General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc.

SAN DIEGO – 29 April 2025 – General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc. (GA-ASI) delivered an MQ-9A Reaper® Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) to the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC). The new MQ-9A Block 5 Extended Range (ER) UAS was delivered on April 22, 2025, and will be operated by Marine Operational Test and Evaluation Squadron 1 (VMX-1), a USMC operational test squadron based at Marine Corps Air Station, Yuma, Arizona.

The new MQ-9A UAS will be used by the USMC to perform operational tests and evaluations, as well as create Marine Aviation tactics, techniques, and procedures through experimentation as the Marines fully implement MQ-9A as a critical part of the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF).

“The Marine Corps is building out its ISR capabilities with this new aircraft,” said GA-ASI President David R. Alexander. “We are excited to see what VMX-1 does in terms of operational test in preparation for pushing new capabilities into the field.”

The MQ-9A ER is designed with field-retrofittable capabilities, such as wing-borne fuel pods and reinforced landing gear, that extend the aircraft's endurance to more than 30 hours while further increasing its operational flexibility. It provides long-endurance, persistent surveillance capabilities, with Full-Motion Video and Synthetic Aperture Radar/Moving Target Indicator/Maritime Mode Radar. An extremely reliable aircraft, MQ-9A ER is equipped with a fault-tolerant flight control system and a triple-redundant avionics system architecture. It is engineered to meet and exceed manned aircraft reliability standards.

To date, GA-ASI has delivered 18 MQ-9A UAS to USMC. The USMC awaits delivery of two additional aircraft by the end of this year.

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## **Coast Guard Cutter Calhoun Seizes Over \$74M in Cocaine Interdicted in Atlantic Ocean**



A Coast Guard Cutter Calhoun (WMSL 759) boarding team interdicts approximately 10,000 pounds of cocaine being smuggled aboard a vessel in the Atlantic Ocean, April 13, 2025. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

From U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, April 28, 2025

ATLANTIC OCEAN – The crew of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Calhoun (WMSL 759) seized approximately 10,000 pounds of cocaine, worth an estimated \$74 million in the Atlantic Ocean, April 12-13, 2025.

The seized contraband was the result of an interdiction in international waters in the Atlantic Ocean, and five suspected smugglers remain in U.S. custody pending prosecutorial disposition.

On April 12, the Calhoun, under tactical control of Coast Guard Atlantic Area, detected a suspicious fishing vessel in international waters exhibiting behavior consistent with

narcotic trafficking approximately 1,265 miles west of Las Palmas, Canary Islands. Calhoun's crew launched a cutter small boat and interdicted the suspicious vessel, apprehending five suspected smugglers and seizing approximately 10,000 pounds of cocaine.

"This interdiction demonstrates the Coast Guard's unwavering commitment to combating transnational criminal organizations (TCOs)," said Vice Adm. Nathan Moore, commander, Coast Guard Atlantic Area. "Our dedicated crews, in close coordination with interagency and international partners, continue to disrupt the flow of illicit narcotics, which serves as a critical strategic action that disrupts the financial networks of TCOs, undermining their ability to fund further illicit activities that threaten our communities."

The Coast Guard is the United States' lead federal maritime law enforcement agency with authority to enforce national and international laws on the high seas and waters within U.S. jurisdiction. The Coast Guard continues increased operations to interdict, seize and disrupt transshipments of cocaine and other bulk illicit drugs by sea. These drugs fuel and enable cartels and TCOs to produce and traffic illegal fentanyl, threatening the United States.

Calhoun, which commissioned in 2024, is the newest of four, 418-foot, Legend-class national security cutters homeported in North Charleston, South Carolina. The cutter's primary missions are counter-drug operations and defense readiness.

Calhoun falls under the command of U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, which is based in Portsmouth, Virginia. U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area oversees all Coast Guard operations east of the Rocky Mountains to the Arabian Gulf. In addition to surge operations, they also allocate ships to deploy to the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific to combat transnational organized crime and illicit maritime activity.

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# **BAE Systems Receives \$188M USMC Contract for Amphibious Combat Vehicle 30mm**



YORK, Penn. – April 29, 2025 – BAE Systems has been awarded a \$188 million full-rate production contract from the U.S. Marine Corps for 30 ACV-30mm vehicles, which includes fielding support, spares and test equipment. This is the first award as part of the FRP Lot 5/6 contract.

The ACV-30 includes an integrated medium caliber Remote Turret System which the government is procuring separately and integrating at Naval Information Warfare Integration Center Atlantic. The ACV-30 enables transport of troops, mission essential equipment, and other payloads, while providing the lethality and protection Marines need. The lightweight turret system also ensures platform mobility is preserved.

“The ACV is tested and proven to be incredibly adaptable – it not only swims, but it’s also optimized for ship-to-shore, island-hopping, and advanced land operations,” said Rebecca McGrane, vice president of Amphibious programs at BAE Systems. “With enhanced direct-fire lethality via the 30mm fully stabilized weapon system, the ACV-30 helps to ensure Marines are ready for any mission, land or sea.”

In addition, BAE Systems is currently under contract for the ACV-Personnel (ACV-P) and ACV-Command (ACV-C). The ACV-P variant has the ability to transport 13 combat-loaded Marines plus three crew, while the ACV-C variant provides multiple workstations for Marines to maintain and manage situational awareness in the battle space.

The company is also building three ACV-Recovery (ACV-R) variant Production Representative Test vehicles which will provide field maintenance, recovery, and repair capabilities to the Assault Amphibian companies in support of the Marine division.

Work for the ACV-30mm will take place in York, Pennsylvania, Johnstown, Pennsylvania and Charleston, South Carolina through the third quarter of 2026.

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## **Robotic Blasting Facility to Be Upgraded for Amphibious Assault Vehicles**



From BlastOne International

*BlastOne International and US Marines Base Partner to upgrade Surface Preparation Facility with Robotic Blasting to Skyrocket Efficiency, Safety, and Performance for Amphibious Assault Vehicle Repair*

COLUMBUS, Ohio, April 29, 2025 /PRNewswire-PRWeb/ – BlastOne International is proud to announce its latest [partnership with the US Marine Corp](#) base in Albany Georgia to upgrade their existing blast facility with a state-of-the-art [robotic blasting system](#). This groundbreaking initiative is designed to

revolutionize the surface preparation of armored amphibious assault vehicles prior to being re-coated. This investment will bring cutting-edge automation, efficiency, and safety to the coating facility at the US Marine's base, reinforcing BlastOne's commitment to innovation and excellence in industrial surface treatment.

By integrating robotics into their blasting process, the US Marine Corp are eliminating inefficiencies, enhancing safety, and dramatically improving quality—all while reducing operational costs for Amphibious Assault Vehicle Repair

### **Project Overview**

The Albany, Georgia, project will feature a fully integrated robotic blasting system, leveraging the latest in automation and abrasive recovery technology to streamline operations while reducing costs and environmental impact. The project includes:

- B20S7 Gantry-Mounted Blast Robot – An 8-axis robotic system capable of processing up to 2,150 square feet per hour, ensuring precision and consistency in surface treatment.
  
- BP1400 Robotic Blast Pots – A dual-chamber design allowing for continuous blasting without downtime for refilling.
  
- Advanced Abrasive Recovery System – Including a robot-rated bucket elevator, airwash system, and storage hopper, optimizing abrasive recycling and reducing material waste.
  
- 150HP Abrasive Vacuum System – A heavy-duty industrial

vacuum designed specifically for harsh blasting environments, ensuring a clean and efficient workspace.

- Turnkey Installation & Engineering Support – BlastOne will provide comprehensive project management, engineering, and installation services, ensuring seamless integration and long-term success.

### **Driving Industry Innovation**

“This partnership with the US Marines is a testament to BlastOne’s mission of providing superior performance in surface preparation,” said Brad Gooden, Director at BlastOne International. “By integrating robotics into their blasting process, we are eliminating inefficiencies, enhancing safety, and dramatically improving quality—all while reducing operational costs.”

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**Harry S. Truman Carrier  
Strike Group F/A-18 Super  
Hornet Lost at Sea**



From the Navy Office of Information, 28 April 2025

MANAMA, Bahrain – USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75) lost an F/A-18E Super Hornet assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 136 and a tow tractor as the aircraft carrier operated in the Red Sea, April 28. All personnel are accounted for, with one Sailor sustaining a minor injury.

The F/A-18E was actively under tow in the hangar bay when the move crew lost control of the aircraft. The aircraft and tow tractor were lost overboard.

Sailors towing the aircraft took immediate action to move

clear of the aircraft before it fell overboard. An investigation is underway.

The Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group and embarked air wing remain fully mission capable.

The strike group consists of flagship Harry S. Truman, the nine squadrons of Carrier Air Wing 1, three guided-missile destroyers of Destroyer Squadron 28, and the Ticonderoga-class cruiser USS Gettysburg (CG 64).