

GA-ASI and AeroVironment Complete First-Ever Air Launch of Switchblade 600 from MQ-9A UAS



Release of Smaller Loitering Munition Further Validates Large UAS as Motherships

[From General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc.](#)

SAN DIEGO – 10 September 2025 – General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI) and AeroVironment (“AV”) (NASDAQ: AVAV) collaborated on the air launch of a Switchblade 600 loitering munition (LM) from a GA-ASI Block 5 MQ-9A unmanned aircraft system (UAS). The flight testing took place from July 22-24 at the U.S. Army Yuma Proving Grounds Test Range. It marked the first time a Switchblade 600 has ever been launched from an unmanned aircraft.

“This cooperative effort showcased how combining different unmanned technologies could really provide value and effects

to the warfighter,” said GA-ASI President David R. Alexander. “By using MQ-9A to carry the Switchblade, the MQ-9A is able to stand off farther from enemy weapons systems and increase the range of the SB600, which will provide greater access and options in contested airspace.”

After successfully integrating the SB600 with the MQ-9A, the team released two LMs: one with an inert warhead and the other with a high-explosive round. After launch, the team transferred control of the Switchblade from a user in the MQ-9A’s ground control station to a user on the ground nearer the operational area.

The test further validated GA-ASI’s ability to integrate and operate a variety of airborne launched effects on the battlefield – including both those built by GA-ASI and by partners such as AV – and how their use in conflict provides risk-tolerant options to commanders in contested operations.