

Platform Aerospace's Vanilla UAS – Communications Relay at Valiant Shield 2024



HOLLYWOOD, Md., June 20, 2024 (Newswire.com) – Platform Aerospace's Ultra-Long Endurance Group 3 Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS), Vanilla, completed mission requirements during a 27-hour flight at the Valiant Shield 2024 (VS24) exercise in Guam.

From June 7th to June 18th, Platform Aerospace participated in VS24, a training exercise built on the collaborative efforts of the United States Navy, Marine Corps, Army, Air Force, Coast Guard, Space Force, and partner nations.

Upon take-off from Andersen Air Force Base (AAFB) in Guam, Vanilla completed mission requirements by demonstrating communications relay functionality through Link 16 (BATS-D) and Silvus radio connections to other participating assets, including High Altitude Balloons (HABS) and manned and unmanned air and surface vessels. In the early hours of June 13th, Vanilla flew through substantial precipitation, including multiple events of 1,000 ft/min climbs and descents due to airmass motion, in the mission airspace. Due to ongoing extreme weather, Platform Aerospace operators returned to base early rather than risk damage to the aircraft.

On June 14, Vanilla returned to AAFB and executed a normal landing on runway 24R. Landing occurred at 11:21 local, concluding a 1-day, 3-hour, 2-minute flight with the Link 16 relay active for the entire duration. Whereas this is a relatively short flight for Vanilla, which has demonstrated >8-days of unrefueled endurance in a desert environment, this flight demonstrates advanced technology readiness for any military operational environment.

Vanilla can be configured for Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR), Communications Relay, Decoy, Air Launched Effects (ALE), Signals Intelligence (SIGINT), Electronic Warfare (EW), or any combination of those mission requirements.

Vanilla is a Rapid Defense Experimentation Reserve (RDER) Program; VS24 was Vanilla's graduation event and formal Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 8 assessment. Platform Aerospace participated in VS24 in partnership with OUSD(R&E) and the 3rd MDTF.