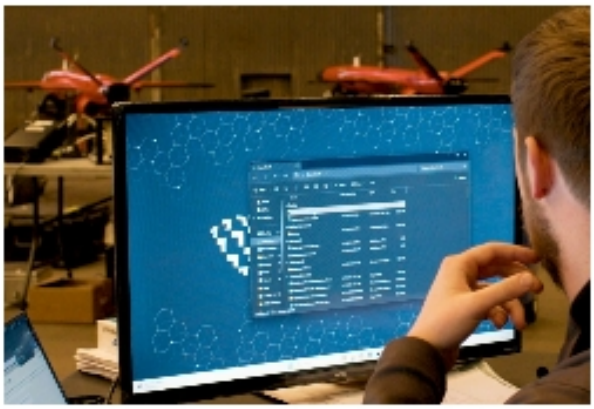
SHIELD AI CONDUCTS AI-PILOTED FLIGHTS ON SIXTH AIRCRAFT

News / Manufacturer



Shield AI announced successful completion of the first phase of Shield's AI-piloted flight-testing on-board Kratos platforms as the two companies move toward productizing Shield AI's pilot for the XQ-58 Valkyrie. Having successfully flown AI pilots on five aircraft — three classes of quadcopters, the MQ-35A V-BAT, and the F-16 in fully autonomous air combat training — Shield AI's Hivemind AI pilot has now successfully flown on and controlled the Kratos MQM-178 Firejet. These successful flights are a major milestone in the comprehensive integration project as Shield AI and Kratos look to ultimately productize another configuration of the Valkyrie, in this case with Shield AI's Hivemind AI pilot.

Ryan Tseng, Shield AI's CEO and Co-Founder, commented: "Our substantial investments in autonomy and AI design tools, infrastructure, and pipelines are what enable Shield AI to rapidly integrate Hivemind onto different classes of aircraft and most importantly, fly them safely. We're getting faster and faster. It was over three years from signing the contract to flying the F-16; now, it's less than 180 days for the Kratos Firejet. The vision of portable autonomy software for military hardware has been realized, flown, and deployed by Shield AI."

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Brandon Tseng, Shield AI's President and Co-Founder and a former Navy SEAL, said: "AI pilots will eventually fly all aircraft and will have a larger global impact than self-driving cars. The MQM-178 Firejet marks the sixth type of aircraft that our AI pilot Hivemind has flown. It is the second jet-powered aircraft after our AI piloted F-16 dogfights. The AI-piloted XQ-58 Valkyrie flights later this year will be the seventh aircraft and then the Kratos BQM-177 will be the eighth. Kratos and Shield AI's joint focus on the rapid development of AI-piloted aircraft has been a terrific collaboration that is helping redefine military force structures."

The MQM-178 Firejet fills a variety of end-to-end weapons-release training roles as a jet target aircraft system, supporting surface-to-air and air-to-air engagements. Additionally, the Tactical Firejet offers an offensive/defensive jet UAS system in the sub $500K price range per aircraft with substantial mission systems and performance capabilities. In either mission configuration (target/tactical), the Firejet delivers a high-speed, high-maneuverability, low-signature solution for replicating threats or enabling no-risk-to-American-life operational effectiveness with a level of contested environment capability.

Steve Fendley, President of Kratos' Unmanned Systems Division stated: "The collaboration between Kratos and Shield AI over these past months has been nothing short of exceptional and represents the rapid development and testing possible when motivated commercial technology companies work together with a common objective—being first to market with relevant systems to support U.S. National Security. Our joint efforts have brought together the best of both worlds – Kratos' proven jet-powered uncrewed aircraft and Shield AI's expertise in AI and software development. We're thrilled about the progress we've made and even more excited to share further breakthroughs in the near future."

01 APRIL 2024

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