



## Merlin Names Board of Directors Including Former Secretary of the Navy, Amazon's First Chief Accounting Officer, and Former Blue Origin CEO

April 16, 2026

### Newly public aerospace and defense technology company assembles board combining deep defense leadership, public company governance expertise, and aerospace technical excellence

BOSTON, April 16, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- [Merlin, Inc.](#) (NASDAQ: MRLN), an aerospace and defense technology company building the operating system of record for autonomous flight, today announced the composition of its Board of Directors following the closing of Merlin Labs, Inc.'s business combination with Inflection Point Acquisition Corp. IV and the commencement of trading on the Nasdaq Global Market on March 17, 2026.

The Board is composed of seven directors, including founder and CEO Matt George as Chairman, and six directors determined to be independent under Nasdaq listing rules.

"Each of our directors brings a distinct and complementary perspective, from serving as Secretary of the Navy to taking transformative technology companies public to leading some of the most complex aerospace programs in the world," said George. "Building a board of this caliber reflects our commitment to operating with the governance standards and strategic depth that our mission requires, and we are a better, stronger company for having their counsel as we execute on our vision for autonomous flight."

#### Board of Directors

**Matt George**, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer is the founder of Merlin, having built the company from inception through its public listing on Nasdaq (MRLN) in March 2026. Mr. George founded Merlin on the thesis that aviation's human-centric design assumptions can and should be challenged. Under his leadership, Merlin has achieved over \$100 million in total contract value, including a [USSOCOM IDIQ for the C-130J program](#), and [advanced a dual-track civil certification program](#) with the FAA and New Zealand's Civil Aviation Authority. Prior to founding Merlin, Mr. George founded and served as Chief Executive Officer of Bridj, a technology company and booking and fleet management platform, and worked in the Executive Office of the President at the White House.

**Michael Blitzer** joins Merlin as Lead Independent Director. As Chairman and CEO of Inflection Point Fund I L.P., Mr. Blitzer has led a portfolio of successful public listings of strategically important assets across aerospace, defense, and critical minerals and infrastructure. Mr. Blitzer has been Chairman of USA Rare Earth (Nasdaq: USAR) since 2025 and led the company's global expansion including private-public partnerships in the United States and Europe. Mr. Blitzer is also a director of Intuitive Machines (Nasdaq: LUNR), which was the first commercial company to land successfully on the lunar surface with its IM-1 mission in 2024. Across the Inflection Portfolio, Mr. Blitzer has led capital raises and significant M&A transactions totaling more than \$10B. Mr. Blitzer is a graduate of Cornell University and Columbia Business School.

**Kenneth Braithwaite** dedicated much of his career to public service, serving as the 77th Secretary of the Navy from May 2020 to January 2021, as United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway from January 2018 to May 2020, and as an officer and Naval Aviator of the United States Navy from July 1980 to June 2011, retiring at the rank of Rear Admiral. Ambassador Braithwaite serves as a Fellow at the NATO School in Oberammergau, Germany. He is also Chairman of the board of Fincantieri USA as well as being Senior Advisor to Kongsberg Defence and Saronic Technologies.

**Kelyn Brannon** served as the first Chief Accounting Officer at Amazon.com, Inc., where she helped establish the financial and reporting foundation for one of the world's largest and most complex technology companies. She began her career at Ernst & Young LLP, both in Silicon Valley and the United Kingdom, working in audit and corporate finance. Ms. Brannon has also served as Chief Financial Officer at several technology companies including Celestial AI, where she transitioned from the role in connection with Marvell Technology Inc.'s acquisition of the company, as well as Asure Software, Inc. Ms. Brannon has also led three successful public offerings as CFO, including Calix, Astra (ASTR), and Arista Networks, Inc.

**Michael Montelongo** is a former White House appointee who served as the Chief Financial Officer and 19th Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Financial Management and Comptroller from August 2001 to March 2005, and completed a career in the U.S. Army that included a Congressional Fellowship in the U.S. Senate and service as an assistant professor teaching economics and political science at West Point. Mr. Montelongo has served as a Senior Lecturer of Business Administration on the Harvard

#### Board of Directors



Merlin's Board of Directors at Nasdaq Bell Ringing on March 17, 2026. Photo credit: 2026 Nasdaq, Inc. / Vanja Savic

Business School faculty and Executive Fellow since October 2023, and is the founder and CEO of GRC Advisory Services, LLC, a board governance firm, a position he has held since July 2016. He currently serves on the boards of Civeo Corporation (NYSE: CVEO), Monarca Food Solutions, and the National Association of Corporate Directors (NACD).

**Dr. Robert H. Smith** served as Chief Executive Officer of Blue Origin from September 2017 until January 2024, and previously held various leadership roles at Honeywell Aerospace from July 2004 to August 2017, including CTO and President of Mechanical Systems and Components, as well as roles at United Space Alliance and The Aerospace Corporation. Dr. Smith holds a master's degree in Applied Math and Engineering from Brown University, a master's degree from MIT's Sloan School of Management, and a PhD in Aerospace Engineering from the University of Texas at Austin. He currently serves as a director at Parsons Corporation (NYSE: PSN) and as an independent director at Seurat Technologies.

**Carolyn Trabuco** co-founded Azul Linhas Aéreas Brasileiras SA (NYSE: AZUL), a Brazilian airline, in 2007 and served as a director until April 2025. She previously served as a sector leader for Aerospace & Defense and Advanced Manufacturing at AdvanceCT, where she worked to attract capital investment and jobs to Connecticut's defense industrial base. She is the Chief Executive Officer of Thistledown Advisory Group, LLC, a strategic advisory firm she founded in 2017. Ms. Trabuco has over 25 years of experience in portfolio management and equity research at firms including Phibro Energy Trading LLC, Pequot Capital Management and Wells Fargo. She currently serves on the board of USA Rare Earth (Nasdaq: USAR).

#### **About Merlin**

Merlin is an aerospace and defense technology company building the operating system of record for autonomous flight. Through a first-principles approach, the company is redefining what's possible across aviation, aerospace, and defense with the goal of delivering full-stack autonomy for any aircraft, military or civilian, from takeoff to touchdown. The Merlin Pilot system powers a growing range of aircraft and mission profiles, proven through hundreds of autonomous flights from test facilities across the globe. With \$100M+ total in awarded contracts from military customers, Merlin is advancing American leadership in autonomous aviation by helping to solve national security challenges through safe, reliable autonomy. To learn more, visit [www.merlinlabs.com](http://www.merlinlabs.com) or follow us on X [@merlinaero](https://twitter.com/merlinaero).

#### **Cautionary Statement Regarding Forward Looking Statements**

*This press release contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. All statements other than statements of historical fact should be considered forward-looking statements, including without limitation statements regarding the composition and anticipated contributions of our Board of Directors, our strategy and growth plans, our technology development and certification activities, and our expectations regarding value creation and autonomous flight leadership. These forward-looking statements are based on our current expectations and projections about future events and trends. These forward-looking statements are neither promises nor guarantees, but involve known and unknown risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from any future results, performance or achievements expressed or implied by the forward-looking statements, including without limitation the risks, uncertainties, and assumptions as described in our filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission described under "Risk Factors" in Merlin's Form S-1 Registration Statement filed with the SEC on April 15, 2026. Except as required by applicable law, we undertake no obligation to update any of these forward-looking statements for any reason after the date of this press release.*

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A photo accompanying this announcement is available at <https://www.globenewswire.com/NewsRoom/AttachmentNg/091a2618-1772-4727-9b84-cb4360562d34>