



Merlin Achieves Next Stage in Certification of Its Autonomous Flight Technology

August 6, 2026

Merlin has achieved Stage of Involvement (SOI) 3 for a combined AI-powered natural language processing and full flight autonomy system in a Part 23 certification program with the Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand

BOSTON, Aug. 06, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- [Merlin, Inc.](#) (Merlin), an aerospace and defense technology company building the operating system of record for autonomous flight, today announced it has successfully achieved the Stage of Involvement 3 (SOI 3) milestone with the [Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand](#) (CAANZ) for two critical components of the Merlin Pilot autonomy platform: the Flight Control Computer (FCC) and the Automated Communication System (ACS). The work has been conducted with CAANZ in coordination with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) under a Bilateral Aviation Safety Agreement.

Achieving SOI 3 marks a major certification milestone to confirm that Merlin's software has been tested and verified against its requirements. The milestone builds on prior Stage of Involvement achievements, including [SOI 1](#) and [SOI 2](#), and shows Merlin is progressing through the rigorous certification process put in place by regulators. Merlin has also successfully concluded an important issue paper addressing the use of AI/ML-based natural language processing within the certification program, signifying that Merlin and CAANZ have agreed on the certification approach and the evidence required to demonstrate that the Merlin Pilot's AI/ML-based capabilities are safe and perform as intended.

"This milestone underscores Merlin's approach of building trusted autonomy in partnership with regulators. This is significant as we're not building experimental AI, but rather aviation-grade autonomy that performs full phase autonomy from takeoff to touchdown," said Tim Burns, Chief Technology Officer, Merlin. "Achieving SOI 3 establishes a foundation for certification of our flight autonomy and AI capabilities and reflects the disciplined engineering processes we have built through this program. As we continue onto the final stages of the certification process, our focus remains on delivering autonomy that enhances operational safety, improves efficiency, and enables new levels of capability across the aviation ecosystem."

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 IDIQ contract ceiling value under its C-130J autonomy program with USSOCOM, Merlin is advancing American leadership in autonomous aviation. To learn more, visit www.merlinlabs.com or follow us on X [@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 achievement of future certification milestones and Merlin's coordination with the Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand and the Federal Aviation Administration under the Bilateral Aviation Safety Agreement, Merlin's expectations regarding the capabilities, performance, and applications of the Merlin Pilot autonomy platform, including its AI/ML-based natural language processing and full flight autonomy capabilities, and the anticipated benefits and future development of Merlin's autonomous flight technology. These forward-looking statements are based on our current expectations, assumptions, 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 those expressed or implied by the forward-looking statements, including without limitation the risks and uncertainties detailed under the section entitled "Risk Factors"; of our final prospectus, dated May 13, 2026, filed with the SEC on May 13, 2026, and in our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q filed with the SEC on May 15, 2026. Except as required by applicable law, we undertake no obligation to update any of these forward-looking statements 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/c35f9f84-a7d3-4185-a7a4-c9db58a4326c>