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Intel Announces “Aero” Drone Development Platform.

[Aviation International News](#) (8/19) reported that last week, Intel Corporation “announced the launch of the ‘Aero Ready to Fly’ quadcopter drone, designed as a platform for drone application developers.” Intel said that when the platform is “matched with the optional Vision Accessory Kit, developers will have opportunities to launch sophisticated drone applications.” A report by [Business Insider](#) (8/19) and an article on the [CNN Money](#) (8/18) website also described the Aero drone. The quadcopter platform supports “plug and play” options, including a flight controller with open-source Dronecode PX4 software; Intel’s “RealSense” camera for obstacle avoidance; and the Map SDK (software development kit) from AirMap, of Santa Monica, Calif., for airspace mapping applications.

Australia Deploys Heron UAV During Military Exercise.

[Flightglobal](#) (8/19) reported that the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) successfully utilized its Heron 1 UAV during its Pitch Black military exercise in Australia. The article explained that the multinational military exercise involved about 115 aircraft and 2,500 personnel from a number of countries including Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Indonesia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand and the US.

New FAA Drone Rule Will Lower Pilot Certification Requirements.

The [Salina \(KS\) Journal](#) (8/21) reports that on August 29, the FAA’s new rule for the commercial use of drones will take effect. The new rule lowers the barrier for drone pilot certification and now requires only that drone pilots be 16 years of age or older, undergo some TSA vetting, and “hold a remote pilot airman certificate with a small UAS (unmanned aircraft system) rating, which is awarded after passing a written aeronautical knowledge test at an FAA-approved testing center.” Some Wichita businesses that provide services using drones expect to be affected by this new rule by possibly bringing them into competition with their clients.

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Aptonomy Debuts Autonomous UAV SecurityGuard.

[TechCrunch](#) (8/22) reports that UAV developer Aptonomy has created a “flying security guard” that is able to thwart prison breaks, burglaries, and robberies. The article explains that Aptonomy is offering an upgraded DJI S-1000+ octocopter that includes “a new flight controller, and second computer to power day- and night-vision cameras, bright lights, and loudspeakers, among other things.” Additionally, the company also has developed artificial intelligence and navigational capabilities that enable its UAVs to fly low and fast, “avoiding obstacles in structure-dense environments, and detecting human activity or faces in the area, autonomously.” Using those features, an Aptonomy UAV “can record suspicious activity, shine a light on intruders, allow two-way communication with the intruder through loudspeakers, and generally scare off potential troublemakers as an intimidating presence in the air.”

Henry County Police In Georgia To Purchase UAVs.

The [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#) (8/22) reports that the Henry County Board of Commissioners in Georgia recently approved an \$18,661 purchase of “two unmanned aircraft and assorted accessories for use by the Henry County Police Department.” The purchase will be made using funds from “the federal asset forfeiture and seized funds account.”

NASA Partners With Eight Universities To Develop Small Spacecraft.

[ExecutiveBiz](#) (8/22) reports that NASA has selected teams from eight different universities to collaborate with the space agency on two-year-long projects to develop small spacecraft that could support research, exploration and

space operations. The article explains that NASA chose from a broad array of proposals related to “enhanced power generation and storage, crosslinking communications systems, relative navigation for multiple small spacecraft as well as instruments and sensors for small spacecraft science missions.” The selected partner universities include Rochester Institute of Technology, the University of Miami, the University of California, the University of Florida, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stanford University, Arizona State University, and the University of Michigan.

QinetiQ to Integrate Unmanned Systems in Multinational Demonstration Published: 17 Aug 2016

QinetiQ has announced that it will provide the UK component of a multinational demonstration of unmanned and autonomous systems under a new contract with the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl). The demonstration, dubbed Hell Bay 4, will see a variety of unmanned underwater, surface and air vehicles working co-operatively within a number of squads, autonomously undertaking mine countermeasures missions.

QinetiQ will lead a team that includes Seebyte, Blue Bear Systems Research and ASV in the exercise, which involves participants from the US, Canada and Australia. QinetiQ is contracted to deliver the third phase of the MAF, in which an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) will be introduced into the squad to provide situational awareness and communications relay to vehicles on and under the water. It will bring together underwater vehicles operated by the Royal Navy’s autonomous systems trials team, an unmanned C-Worker 5 surface vehicle provided by ASV and the Blue Bear Blackstart UAV.

<http://www.unmannedsystemstechnology.com/2016/08/qinetiq-to-integrate-unmanned-systems-in-multinational-demonstration/>

Elbit Systems of America Showcases Hermes 450 UAS Published: 17 Aug 2016

UASElbit Systems of America has announced that, along with its local partners, it has hosted an Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) field day at the Hillsboro Regional Airport in North Dakota. The event served to highlight the firm’s recent Hermes 450 flights over North Dakota and welcomed Lt. Governor Drew Wrigley, who served as Master of Ceremonies. Also attending were U.S. Sen. John Hoeven, R-N.D. and U.S. Rep. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D.

Equipped with advanced sensors and high resolution cameras, such as the Vision Map A3 Edge and the Elbit Systems Compass EO/IR real time sensor, the Hermes 450 is capable of covering 40,000 acres in one hour and can remain in flight for 17 hours.

Elbit Systems of America, a US company headquartered in Fort Worth, Texas, has been operating from the Hillsboro Regional Airport for the last four months where it has flown multiple precision agriculture flights. In collaboration with North Dakota State University and the Northern Plains UAS Test Site, Elbit Systems of America has worked with select local farmers to gather and analyze data for crop management improvement, increasing efficiency, and greater yield.

<http://www.unmannedsystemstechnology.com/2016/08/elbit-systems-of-america-showcases-hermes-450-uas/>

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Authorities Confiscate UAV Flying Over Green Bay Packers Football Game.

The [AP](#) (8/23) reports that federal authorities have confiscated a UAV that flew over Lambeau Field during a Green Bay Packers pre-season game last week. Officials noted that it is against the law to operate a UAV above the

stadium due to the potential for harm. Green Bay Police Commander Paul Ebel “says the drone could malfunction and crash into the crowd, or worse, it could contain a bomb.”

Parrot Launches \$1,300 Fixed-Wing Consumer UAV.

[PC Magazine](#) (8/23) reports that on Tuesday, UAV developer Parrot announced the commercial rollout of the Disco, “which it describes as the first fixed-wing consumer drone.” The article notes that the UAV can fly at 50 miles per hour and has a 45 minute battery life, “as well as all the autopilot, GPS, and other easy-to-use features you’d expect from Parrot.” The machine also has a \$1,299 retail price, “significantly higher than that of most Parrot drones.” The article explains that the Disco features automatic takeoff and landing capability, and other technologies that have long been used on larger aircraft, “including pitot tubes that let it measure airspeed and an inertial navigation system comprising an accelerometer, gyroscope, magnetometer, and altimeter.”

CNN Launches CNN AIR for UAS Newsgathering

By AUVSI News posted 4 days ago

On Thursday, CNN announced the launch of their new initiative called CNN Aerial Imagery and Reporting, or CNN AIR. As a part of this initiative, CNN will use unmanned aircraft systems controlled by two full-time operators to cover news and events for CNN, Turner Broadcasting and Time Warner.

CNN has played a significant part of the media’s entry into the world of unmanned systems. Back in 2015, they were one of three media companies that worked with the Federal Aviation Administration in an effort to come up with safe uses of UAS during the news-collecting process. Before this launch became official, CNN had already used UAS to document and report on events such as the floods in Louisiana and the Republican and Democratic presidential nominating conventions.

<http://www.auvsi.org/blogs/auvsi-news/2016/08/19/cnn-launches-cnn-air-for-uas-newsgathering>

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DroneDeploy Raises \$20 Million To Expand Aerial Data Platform Ahead Of Part 107.

[Avionics Magazine](#) (8/24) reports that DroneDeploy, a cloud software service company for commercial UAVs, has raised \$20 million in Series B funding primarily from Scale Venture Partners, “bringing its total amount of funding to \$31 million.” The article explains that DroneDeploy plans to make UAVs “accessible and productive tools for anyone,” and recently revealed that its users “had mapped more than 5 million acres across 130 nations.” The article notes that the latest round of financing comes ahead of the August 29 enactment of Part 107, “the FAA’s operating rules for commercial drones,” that is expected to “unleash a new tidal wave of drone adoption as it dramatically simplifies the requirements for businesses to comply.”

Domino’s Pizza Enterprises Completes First Pizza Drone Delivery.

[Reuters](#) (8/25) reports that after 7-Eleven completed the world’s first commercial drone delivery last month as part of a trial, Australia-based Domino’s Pizza Enterprises has orchestrated the first pizza delivery by drone in New Zealand. After completing the test delivery in Auckland on Thursday, the pizza chain “said it aimed to be the first company to launch a regular drone service, late this year.” The article explains that with its open skies and small population, New Zealand became one of the first countries worldwide to approve commercial drone deliveries last year. The article notes that Domino’s, just like 7-Eleven, used drones developed by drone company Flirtey.

[Bloomberg News](#) (8/25) reports that after the test flight, Domino’s Group CEO Don Meij said in a statement, “We’ve always said that it doesn’t make sense to have a two-ton machine delivering a two-kilogram order,” adding,

“The reach that a drone offers is far greater than other current options which are restricted by traffic, roads and sheer distance.”

New FAA Drone Rule Takes Effect Monday, Awaited By Thousands.

[USA Today](#) (8/24) reports that the FAA’s new drone operator rule goes into effect on Monday and many UAS pilots are “eager” to get their certifications. The director of the FAA’s drone office, Earl Lawrence, “said 3,351 people signed up to take a test of aviation knowledge Monday – the first day possible – to certify themselves as drone pilots.” Additionally, another “20,000 commercial drone operators have already registered to start flying,” in anticipation of passing the FAA flying test. On Wednesday, Lawrence addressed a group of congressional staffers, saying, “That’s a good indication we’re going to have a lot of people and a lot of aircraft operating from day one.”

Business Use Of Drones Takes Off As New FAA Rule Takes Effect. The [Spokane \(WA\) Spokesman-Review](#) (8/24) reports the drone industry is expecting accelerated growth “after the Federal Aviation Administration relaxes the rules next week on who can operate small drones for commercial or government purposes.” Drone operators now have to apply only for remote pilot certificates instead of having to become licensed pilots. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx announced the new rule this summer during a press conference, saying, “We’re part of a new era in aviation, and the potential for unmanned aircraft will make it safer and easier to do certain jobs, gather information and deploy disaster relief.” Many commercial drone companies headquartered out west are already seeing an uptick in clients who want to use drones in natural resource management operations.

Drone Forum To Be Held In Wyoming On Thursday.

The [Cody \(WY\) Enterprise](#) (8/24) reports that the Powell Economic Partnership (PEP) and Forward Cody, in collaboration with Northwest College, are hosting a public UAV forum in Powell, Wyoming on Thursday. PEP Executive Director Christine Bekes said that the purpose of the forum is “to highlight the economic potential for Park County and Wyoming in the growing industry of drones.” Bekes noted that a recent study conducted by the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International listed Wyoming as the state that “will benefit the least from this industry over the next 10 years, but we actually have local resources in place already to defy this prediction.”

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Domino’s Pilots Drone Pizza Delivery In New Zealand.

In continuing coverage, the [New Zealand Herald](#) (8/26) reports that Domino’s Pizza Enterprises has teamed up with drone company Flirtey to roll out the first commercial drone delivery service worldwide, beginning in New Zealand later this year. Domino’s Group CEO Don Meij explained that as the business grew, “we were faced with the challenge of ensuring our delivery times continue to decrease and that we strive to offer our customers new and progressive ways of ordering from us.” He added that “research into different delivery methods led us to Flirtey,” which provides an “impressive” airborne delivery service. The pizza chain also indicated that it will use drones in conjunction with other delivery methods, and only in cases where it would be faster than using a car or a scooter.