

Near Earth Autonomy Awarded Program to Prototype Autonomous Logistics Aircraft for U.S. Marine Corps

Pittsburgh, PA, [April 28, 2026] / [Naval Air Systems Command](#) has awarded [Near Earth Autonomy](#) (Near Earth) the Medium Aerial Resupply Vehicle - Expeditionary Logistics (MARV-EL) Increment 2 program, to prototype autonomous logistics aircraft for the U.S. Marine Corps through an Other Transaction Agreement (OTA) under the Naval Aviation Systems Consortium (NASC). Near Earth will lead the program in collaboration with Bell Textron, Moog Inc., and XP Services. The team's Uncrewed 505 aerial logistics aircraft combines Near Earth's Captain autonomy with the Bell 505 and Moog's Genesys avionics in a system ready for tactical-edge resupply in contested environments.



505-Based Autonomous Logistics Aircraft Concept Render

The program addresses a growing logistics challenge for the Marine Corps. As forces disperse under Distributed Maritime Operations and Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations concepts, sustainment demands increase, while exposing onboard helicopter crews to increased risk. The MARV-EL program will develop a risk-worthy, cargo-moving asset that can sustain forces at the tactical edge, where crewed aircraft may be too vulnerable or constrained by force-availability limits and crew-rest cycles during high-tempo 24/7 ops.

"The program is to develop an uncrewed aerial logistics aircraft for where the risk and need are highest," said Lyle Chamberlain, CTO of Near Earth. "We are combining our Captain autonomy architecture with a proven Bell 505 platform to move cargo without putting Marines in harm's way. To be as intuitive as possible, we are designing the aircraft around existing Marine Corps workflows. Operators will be able to request, dispatch, and manage missions through familiar command-and-control pathways, including MAGTAB and MANGL integration. At the same time, cargo can be loaded with standard pallet jacks and forklifts. This approach reduces infrastructure burden and helps make autonomous resupply practical for expeditionary operations."

"This program builds on lessons learned with the Marines on the [Tactical Resupply Unmanned Aircraft System \(TRUAS\)](#) and [Aerial Logistics Connector \(ALC\)](#) programs, while extending the same shared autonomy framework we are using with the Army for the [RUC-60](#) optionally piloted Black Hawk helicopters. Our foundation of insights, technology, and processes dramatically accelerates the development of this product and readiness to scale."



Extend Captain Architecture From [RUC-60](#) (Pictured) to 505

"Our approach optimizes for fast, efficient progress on a mature, OEM-supported aircraft, rather than slowly reinventing the wheel with a new vehicle," said Samuel Dinnar, Chief Strategy Officer at Near Earth. "Each of our collaborators brings a great deal to the table. Bell Textron provides the proven Bell 505 platform, the technical data, and the airworthiness foundation needed for derivative military configurations. Moog delivers the certified flight control system that connects autonomy to the aircraft with high-integrity flight control. XP Services provides the modification, integration, maintenance, and experimental flight-test support needed to progress through every step of development."

"Near Earth's Captain autonomy architecture is a safety-critical, risk-aware, MOSA-based framework. Captain is designed to support autonomous takeoff, en route navigation, obstacle avoidance, GPS-denied navigation, safe landing, and dynamic in-flight mission updates while preserving the assurance artifacts needed for airworthiness and future military flight release processes. The same framework also provides a repeatable path for extending autonomy across multiple logistics aircraft."

"The Bell 505 provides a proven, OEM-supported platform that is well suited for rapid adaptation to new mission requirements," said Jason Hurst, SVP of Engineering, Bell. "By combining that aircraft maturity with Near Earth's autonomy and integration expertise, this program has a strong foundation for delivering an effective autonomous logistics capability for the Marine Corps."

"Moog is proud to bring our innovative design capabilities in autopilots, avionics, and flight-control hardware to a program focused on autonomous logistics for the Marine Corps," said Sharmila Durairaj, General Manager, Moog Avionics. "By combining our flight-control technology with Near Earth's autonomy into the Bell 505 platform, this team has a proven path to delivering a practical autonomous aerial logistics capability for contested operations."

"Our collaboration and flight-test approach show that we have the right team to deliver an autonomous aircraft to support the Marine Corps' requirement to operate in a contested logistics environment," said Ken Pflieger, Program Manager of XP Services. "The XP Services team has performed hundreds of aircraft conversions since its

beginning in 2008. We have the resources to support these aircraft modifications and installations at the rate and standard customers will demand."



Near Earth's Autonomous Aircraft Illustration

The awarded contract will deliver an aerial logistics capability that meets MARV-EL threshold requirements for a 1,300-pound payload, at a 100-nautical-mile combat radius. Near Earth's proposal outlines a Bell 505 configuration designed to exceed selected objectives, including greater payload, capacity for a full Joint Modular Intermodal Container (JMIC), longer combat radius, and efficient transportability, with two aircraft fitting inside a C-130 with minimal disassembly.

This program will build on Near Earth's 13+ years of aerial autonomy innovation, which today includes 10,000+ flights across 140+ airframes. The progression began with the [Autonomous Aerial Cargo/Utility System \(AACUS\)](#) program, which pioneered rotorcraft autonomy for Marine Corps resupply. Near Earth's recent autonomous helicopter development has included the [Kaman K-MAX](#), [Bell 412](#), [Leonardo AW139](#), and [Sikorsky UH-60](#).

Over the next 36 months, Near Earth will integrate and flight test the autonomous flight system, progressing from early demonstrations to full mission capability while helping inform future Marine Corps operational procedures for autonomous aerial logistics.

About Near Earth Autonomy

Near Earth's technology allows aircraft to autonomously take off, fly, and land safely, with or without GPS. Its solutions enable aerial mobility applications for partners in the commercial and defense sectors. Near Earth bridges the gap between aerospace and robotics with complete systems that improve efficiency, performance, and safety for aircraft ranging from small drones to large helicopters. Learn more at nearearth.aero.

About Bell Textron Inc.

Thinking above and beyond is what we do. For more than 90 years, we've been reimagining the experience of flight – and where it can take us.

We're an aerospace and defense company that engineers and manufactures aircraft for critical solutions in extreme scenarios. We're breaking barriers in lifting people to safety across transportation, medical, rescue and military services, and leading the industry in future solutions that are fast, reliable and efficient.

Headquartered in Fort Worth, Texas – as a wholly-owned subsidiary of Textron Inc., – we have strategic locations around the globe. And with nearly one quarter of our workforce having served, helping our military achieve their missions is a passion of ours. Above all, our breakthrough innovations deliver exceptional experiences to our customers. Efficiently. Reliably. And always, with safety at the forefront.

About Moog

Moog Inc. (NYSE: MOG.A and MOG.B) is a worldwide designer, manufacturer, and systems integrator of high-performance precision motion and fluid controls and control systems. Moog's high-performance systems control military and commercial aircraft, satellites, and space vehicles, launch vehicles, defense systems, missiles, automated industrial machinery, marine and medical equipment. Additional information can be found at www.moog.com.

About XP Services

XP Services is a veteran-owned aviation engineering and integration company specializing in innovative aircraft modification, certification, and flight test support. With a strong foundation in both military and civilian platforms, XP Services delivers tailored solutions that include avionics integration, fly-by-wire / autonomous flight control systems, STC development, and mission system installations. Our in-house team of engineers, A&P / IA technicians, and flight test personnel supports programs from concept through execution, ensuring compliance, performance, and mission success. Headquartered in Tullahoma, Tennessee, XP Services is known for its agility, technical depth, and commitment to delivering results under demanding timelines. Learn more at xpservices.us.