



Merlin and IAI Sign Agreement to Advance AI-Powered Autonomy for Commercial Cargo Aircraft

July 23, 2026

The agreement establishes a framework for joint development, integration and certification of advanced autonomous flight technology for Part 25 freight aircraft

BOSTON, July 23, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- [Merlin](#), Inc. (NASDAQ: MRLN), an aerospace and defense technology company building the operating system of record for autonomous flight, today announced it has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with [Israel Aerospace Industries](#) (IAI), a world-class aerospace and defense leader, to advance the development, integration, and certification of AI-powered autonomy for commercial cargo aircraft. The agreement initiates a phased engagement, including joint market exploration, engineering collaboration, regulatory preparation, and initial platform selection to lay the groundwork for a definitive commercial agreement and a structured path toward civil certification.

IAI Chairman of the Board Boaz Levy: "Throughout its history, IAI has consistently been at the forefront of aerospace innovation, developing technologies that shape the future of aviation. Our collaboration with Merlin reflects a shared commitment to advancing next-generation capabilities that can enhance safety, efficiency, and operational flexibility across the aviation industry. We believe autonomy will play an increasingly important role in the years ahead, and we are proud to partner with innovative companies that are helping define that future."

The collaboration with IAI is part of [Condor](#), Merlin's new product family for large, multi-crew aircraft. As a leading aerospace and defense OEM, IAI brings deep expertise in aircraft design and certification, advanced avionics, and MRO. The company is also a global leader in passenger-to-freighter aircraft conversions, with extensive and established relationships with leading freighter operators and lessors worldwide. By combining Merlin's autonomy expertise with IAI's engineering depth, certification experience, advanced avionics capabilities, and leadership in passenger-to-freighter conversions, the companies aim to advance autonomous flight technologies for Part 25 aircraft that underpin global air cargo operations.

"IAI sits at the center of the global cargo aviation ecosystem, and its deep expertise in aircraft certification, advanced avionics, and freighter conversions makes it a critical partner as we advance the Condor program," said **Matt George, CEO and founder of Merlin**. "Merlin's collaborations with IAI and World Star Aviation reflect growing industry recognition that AI-powered autonomy can enhance safety, improve operational efficiency, and help operators scale existing fleets to meet increasing demand. Together, we're laying the groundwork to bring certifiable autonomy to the aircraft that power global cargo networks."

The agreement between Merlin and IAI builds on growing industry interest in advancing AI-powered autonomy across commercial aviation. Together with Merlin's [recently announced](#) relationship with cargo aircraft lessor World Star Aviation, we believe the collaboration reflects increasing momentum behind the development of certifiable autonomous capabilities for cargo aircraft and the broader aviation ecosystem. Through partnerships that combine operational, engineering, certification, and fleet expertise, the industry is taking important steps toward the future integration of autonomous technologies into existing aircraft platforms.

Yaacov Berkovitz, EVP and GM of IAI Aviation Group: "Autonomous technologies have the potential to become a significant part of the future aviation ecosystem, but their adoption will require far more than software innovation alone. Success will depend on the ability to integrate new capabilities into certified aircraft platforms while meeting the industry's rigorous safety and regulatory standards. By combining Merlin's autonomy expertise with IAI's decades of experience in aircraft engineering, certification, avionics, and freighter conversions, we aim to help advance practical and certifiable solutions for the commercial cargo market."

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. To learn more, visit www.merlinlabs.com or follow us on X @merlinaero.

About Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI)

IAI is a world leader in passenger-to-freighter aircraft conversions, trusted by industry leaders such as Amazon, Atlas, DHL, and

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Aircraft types that IAI currently converts

others. In response to the growing global demand for freighter aircraft, the company is expanding its global network of conversion facilities for the Boeing 777 aircraft. With over 50 years of experience, IAI has been a pioneer in passenger-to-freighter conversions, delivering comprehensive solutions for the global aviation market. The company's portfolio includes passenger-to-cargo conversions, Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) services, business jet customization, aerostructures, aircraft upgrades, and more.

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 anticipated development, integration, and certification activities under the MoU with IAI; the scope, timeline, and commercial potential of the collaborations with IAI and World Star Aviation; the planned extension of the Merlin Pilot autonomy core to Part 25 commercial cargo aircraft and other platforms; the anticipated pathway to a definitive commercial agreement and civil certification; and Merlin's strategy and ability to bring certifiable autonomy to commercial aviation markets. 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/3783e9e3-9114-40b9-907b-39498c6eebdc>