

Blue Water Autonomy Taps Conrad Shipyard to Build Autonomous Surface Vessels

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Post-Series A milestone marks shift from R&D to real-world scale and signals new life for American shipyards

BOSTON, Sept. 24, 2025 /PRNewswire/ – [Blue Water Autonomy](#), the Boston-based technology and shipbuilding company designing and building highly producible unmanned ships for the U.S. Navy, today announced it has entered into a production agreement with [Conrad Shipyard](#), a premier Gulf Coast shipbuilder headquartered in Louisiana. The partnership marks a major step forward in Blue Water’s plan to deploy autonomous surface vessels at fleet scale.

The news comes just weeks after Blue Water announced its Series A, bringing the company to \$61 million raised to date, and reflects the company’s continued momentum in building operationally ready, scalable unmanned ships that meet near-term defense priorities.

“We’re designing for deployment, not just demonstration,” said Rylan Hamilton, co-founder and CEO of Blue Water Autonomy. “Conrad is a world-class shipbuilder with proven capability, and this partnership puts us in a position to deliver ships quickly, while demonstrating the expertise and scale of existing U.S. shipbuilding capacity.”

Under the agreement, Conrad will assemble Blue Water’s first class of autonomous ships. Conrad plans to use multiple facilities to take advantage of its advanced shipbuilding approach, including highly automated panel line and welding techniques, allowing for parallel builds and scalable

throughput.

“Blue Water Autonomy’s design reflects the kind of forward-looking innovation that U.S. shipbuilders are ready to deliver,” said Cecil Hernandez, President and CEO of Conrad Shipyard. “We’re proud to support this program and help bring autonomous naval capabilities to life with the speed, precision, and craftsmanship we’ve been trusted to deliver for over 75 years across commercial and military shipbuilding.”

Blue Water’s partnership with Conrad comes on the heels of consecutive senior shipbuilding hires to build internal capability. Earlier this year, the company hired Tim Glinatsis, a 25-year veteran of General Dynamics NASSCO and Bath Iron Works, followed by multiple hires from the DARPA NOMARS autonomous ship program, including marine engineering lead Ryan Maatta.

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This milestone also reflects the company’s broader strategy to activate underutilized U.S. shipyard capacity, particularly small and mid-tier yards that can adapt quickly to new platforms.

“We’ve designed our vessels to be modular, producible, and buildable across the country,” said Hamilton. “What we’re proving with Conrad is just the start. We want to show that the U.S. has the infrastructure to support autonomy at scale, and the talent to build it.”

Blue Water is focused on working with U.S. shipyards that are fully operational today, shipyards like Conrad, that are proven in both commercial and military shipbuilding and can deliver with speed, scale, and precision. Unlike manned warships, which often require years-long timelines and specialized build environments, Blue Water’s platform is intended to be produced, updated, and maintained with speed and flexibility in mind.