Northrop Grumman’s Talon IQ Flies Shield AI’s Hivemind Software

Northrop Grumman’s Talon IQ – onboard Scaled Composites’ Model 437 – demonstrated a successful mission autonomy flight with Shield AI’s Hivemind software in Mojave, Calif. (Photo Credit: Northrop Grumman)

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Openarchitecture testbed accelerates AIdriven combat capability

From Northrop Gruman, March 19, 2026

MOJAVE, Calif. – March 19, 2026 – Northrop Grumman’s (NYSE:

NOC) Talon IQ™ testbed completed its first partner mission autonomy flight with Shield AI’s Hivemind software, showcasing a readytofly platform that accelerates innovation, cuts development costs and eliminates the need to build a dedicated airframe for every new autonomy solution.

- **Partner-Powered Autonomy:** During the flight, Shield AI’s Hivemind software successfully commanded the aircraft, executing combat air patrol and target engagement maneuvers. Talon IQ then seamlessly swapped back to Northrop Grumman’s own Prism autonomy software.

- **OpenArchitecture and Compliance:** The flight demonstrated how Talon IQ’s plugandplay design can host thirdparty AI platforms and meet U.S. Government Reference Architectures (GRAs), the standards that ensure defense technology components interoperate securely and reliably.

- **Greater Speed, Lower Cost:** Hivemind took to the sky after a singleday hardwareintheloop test, proving an AI package can move from lab to realworld flight rapidly with Talon IQ and its GRA-compliant ecosystem.

Experts:

“We are accelerating autonomous flight innovation with Talon IQ. By integrating Shield AI’s Hivemind into our testbed, we’ve demonstrated an open architecture platform that propels plug and play mission autonomy forward at unprecedented speed,” said Tom Jones, corporate vice president and president, Northrop Grumman Aeronautics Systems.

“Autonomy only scales if it can move quickly from lab to flight,” said Christian Gutierrez, vice president of Hivemind

Solutions at Shield AI. “Talon IQ provides a strong environment for maturing mission autonomy, and this integration shows how Hivemind can transition onto new aircraft with minimal modification, accelerating the path to operational capability. We appreciate Northrop Grumman’s collaboration and the opportunity to demonstrate mission autonomy within the Talon IQ ecosystem.”

Details on Talon IQ:

Talon IQ™ is the nextgeneration autonomous testbed ecosystem in Northrop Grumman’s Project Talon portfolio. Utilizing the Scaled Composites Model 437 aircraft, it provides an openarchitecture, modular ecosystem that lets partners develop, integrate and flighttest missionautonomy software on proven flightautonomy hardware.

Northrop Grumman’s own Prism mission autonomy software has already commanded the same Model 437 airframe, establishing Talon IQ as a flightproven platform. The system is deliberately designed as a collaborative ecosystem that accelerates modular missionautonomy solutions and enables rapid iteration to meet the evolving demands of future customers.

Details on Hivemind software:

Hivemind is Shield AI’s platform-agnostic, GRA-compliant mission autonomy software that assumes the role of a human pilot or operator, enabling unmanned systems to sense, decide, and act. Unlike traditional autopilots that simply follow preplanned routes, Hivemind can reroute around or engage dynamic obstacles, execute collaborative tactics with peer systems and piloted aircraft, respond to unexpected conditions, and complete missions safely and effectively as part of a human-machine team.