Shield AI Delivers First ViDAR Payloads to NAVAIR for U.S. Marine Corps Operations

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WASHINGTON (March 28, 2025) – Shield AI, the deep-tech company building state-of-the-art autonomy software products and defense aircraft, today announced the delivery of its first ViDAR (Visual Detection and Ranging) payloads to NAVAIR's Program Office for the Navy and Marine Corps Small Tactical Unmanned Aircraft Systems (PMA-263), destined for operations with the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC). This milestone marks Shield AI's first turn-key payload delivery and a major step forward in integrating AI-enabled edge solutions into frontline operations.

ViDAR is an AI-enabled optical sensor that leverages edge computing to passively detect, identify, geolocate, and track objects with wide-area motion imagery. It has been deployed in

intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) missions as well as search-and-rescue operations, with proven effectiveness in challenging maritime environments, including up to Sea State 6. Delivering ViDAR as a turn-key payload to the USMC is a testament to its low SWaP (size, weight, and power) efficiency, adaptability, and ability to enhance situational awareness in contested environments.

“As modern battlefields become more contested, platforms must detect, locate, classify, and track threats without relying on active emissions. ViDAR provides real-time, passive optical tracking across land and sea, delivering persistent surveillance at a fraction of the size, weight, and power—without emitting a signal—giving operators a critical advantage in covert operations,” said Christian Gutierrez, Vice President of Hivemind Solutions at Shield AI. “We look forward to seeing ViDAR fly in support of the Marine Corps, helping them gain a decisive edge in modern combat environments.”

ViDAR’s operational deployment follows a rigorous Foreign Comparative Testing (FCT) project initiated by PMA-263 in 2022. The evaluation program included extensive ground and flight testing on unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), validating ViDAR’s performance for USMC-specific operations in wide-area maritime surveillance. The successful completion of the FCT project saw ViDAR transition to a program element within NAVAIR.