

Outlook

The Long, Straight Line

I was over at our Allen Street complex on San Fernando the other morning and stopped for a moment to admire the long line of multi-spindle Wickmans cranking out backshells. If you listen closely, past the hum of those venerable old machines, you can almost hear the echoes of 1956, the year Glenair started out building those very same parts in an aircraft hangar at the Grand Central Air Terminal. Seventy years later, we are still right here in Glendale: the same privately held, independent domestic manufacturer, laser-focused on what we do best—supplying the critical interconnect nervous system that keeps the world's most sophisticated military, aerospace, and industrial technology alive.

In this final quarter of 2026, our annual calendar issue looks back at some of the most game-changing milestones in unmanned systems, guided missiles, and satellite platforms. Looking through those archival photographs, it struck me just how much of our own history is interwoven with these seminal programs.

When the Titan II launch vehicle was conceived in the late 1950s, the defense industry needed something unprecedented: long-length, heavy-duty cable assemblies and unfailing umbilical links capable of handling massive structural loads and intense thermal environments. We rolled up our sleeves, figured out how to blow jacketing onto those impossibly long assemblies, and delivered. That same can-do attitude eventually led to the "Golden Umbilical" life-support cable that kept astronaut Ed White safely tethered to his spacecraft during America's first spacewalk in 1965.

From those early days of the space race to the modern era, our philosophy hasn't changed a lick. We don't build the computer brains, digital sensor arrays, or autonomous flight software. We leave that to the brilliant minds manning our customers' engineering bays. But whether it's a legacy aircraft or a collaborative combat vehicle preparing for a test flight next Tuesday, those systems cannot operate without a flawless interconnect architecture linking power, sensors, communications, and controls. That, my friends, is where we have always excelled—even as the industry has evolved from conventional wiring to gigahertz-speed digital networks, multiport RF systems, fiber optics, and SWaP-optimized packaging.

Today, when engineers survey the landscape of modern electronic warfare and autonomous systems, they find Glenair innovations everywhere: Series 80 Mighty Mouse and Series 89 Nanominiature connectors reducing mass in high-density drone gimbals, El Ocho[®] octaxial contacts pushing 10GbE data through guided weapons, Series 795 Micro-Crimp designs integrating 65 GHz RF lines into radar seekers, and SuperFlex PCB assemblies surviving the punishing vibration of autonomous flight.

Seventy years is a long time to do anything. But when you build a culture around unconditional product availability, real-time engineering support, and an absolute refusal to let a customer down, the decades seem to pass in the blink of an eye. There is a long, straight line connecting the Glenair of 70 years ago with who we are today. To all our customers, partners, and the entire Glenair family who helped us build this remarkable legacy: take a bow.

Chris Toomey

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