

SYNAPSE

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**IF YOU CAN RACE 'EM.
YOU CAN FIGHT 'EM.**

MCIC MARINES TAKE PODIUM
AT DRONE COMPETITION

JUNE 2026



FORT GEORGE G. MEADE, Md. – U.S. Marines from Marine Corps Information Command (MCIC) participated in the 2nd annual Interservice Drone Maneuver Competition, May 7-8, 2026, at the AI+ Expo in Washington, D.C., after assembling with only two weeks to prepare. Hosted by the U.S. National Drone Association, the competition brought together servicemembers from across the Department of War to compete in a first-person view drone racing event requiring participants to pilot FPV drones through a timed obstacle course.

The MCIC Marines represented the Marine Corps despite having limited time to organize and no opportunity to practice together as a team prior to the event. Although many of the Marines had previous FPV drone experience individually, the competition marked the first time they operated together as a team.

“To be able to come together on the first day and at the end of the second day win 2nd place overall is an accomplishment,” said Marcus Alvarez, a cyberspace warfare officer who served as the senior Marine representative for the Marine Corps Information Drone Team.

Marines used simulators and prior drone experience to quickly familiarize themselves with the course before the competition began.

“This was my first time doing an actual FPV race and there definitely was a learning curve,” said Elijah Renegar, a Marine Air-Ground Task Force intelligence officer who served as the team captain and one of the drone operators. “The FPVs we used for this course were not purpose-built racing drones. They had some significant weight to them relative to their size.”

As the competition progressed, the team adjusted responsibilities and relied on collaboration between participants to improve performance throughout each round.

“As a team we were able to distinguish our best flyers to race at specific times and for specific events to ensure the best outcome,” said Benjamin Hodge, an electromagnetic warfare technician who participated as a drone operator. “Additionally, we would talk with one another on tips and tricks for the race.” The event also gave Marines opportunities to engage with other service members and organizations involved in emerging drone technologies.

“The military as a whole is very invested in drones,” said Hodge. “Not only did the competition allow everyone to show off their FPV skills, but it also allowed for networking of pilots to occur.” Participants said events like the competition provided opportunities to exchange ideas and improve proficiency alongside other FPV operators.

“ MCIC Marines demonstrated they can race FPV drones... and if they can race them, they can fight them.”

-Marcus Alvarez
Cyberspace Warfare Officer who served as the senior Marine representative for the Marine Information Drone team

Participants emphasized the importance of continued collaboration and information sharing as drone capabilities continue to evolve.

“We must break down our silos and increase information sharing across the services,” said Alvarez. “The Marine Corps takes this seriously; we are willing to be a learning organization and we are undeniably part of the solution and we are in this fight.” The Marines said the experience reinforced the importance of continued training and preparation ahead of future competitions.

“I’m very proud of the team for the finish we had,” said Renegar. “Watching the FPV skills grow from the first heat to the finals across the team truly was amazing. We will definitely formalize our team and practice for next year so we can take home first.”

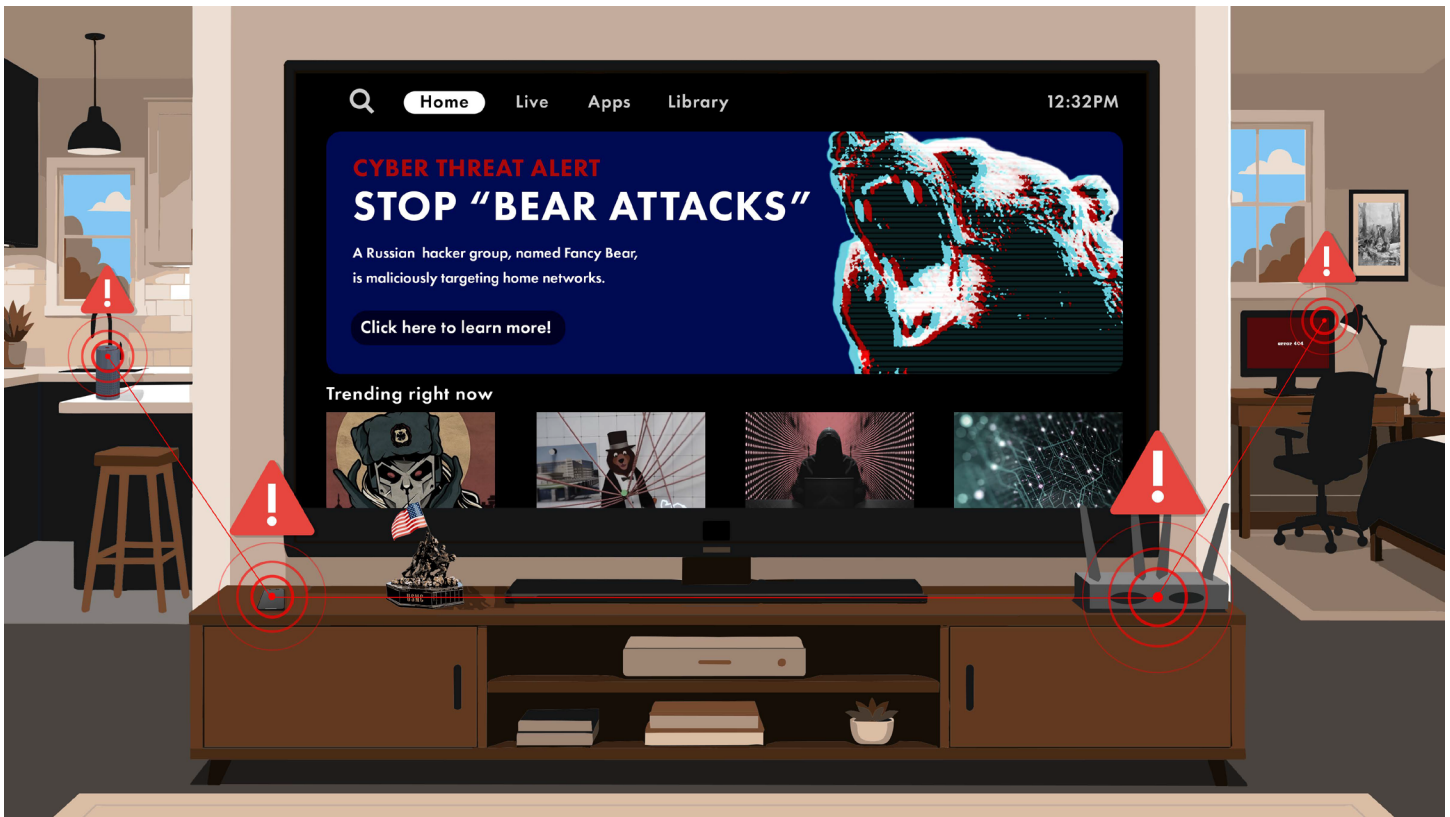
The names of the participants have been altered to protect the identities of the operators.

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The custom NDAA-Compliant FPV drone built by Strongpoint Labs for the event. These drones were not built to be racing drones, providing an extra challenge for the servicemembers piloting the course.

AROUND THE HORN



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