

French Navy embarks S-100 Camcopter on inaugural Jeanne d'Arc task force deployment



The S-100 UAS, seen here in a containerised mission module on board Dixmude.

Source: IHS Markit/Ridzwan Rahmat

Key Points

- The French Navy has included the S-100 Camcopter UAS as part of an annual task force deployment for the first time
- The embarkation aims to validate the system's suitability for deployment across all three ships in the Mistral class

The French Navy's third Mistral-class amphibious vessel, FNS Dixmude (L 9015), is embarked with a Schiebel S-100 Camcopter rotor-winged unmanned aerial system (UAS) as part of the service's Jeanne d'Arc task force deployment for the first time.

The UAS is being deployed to assist the vessel's crew in several different operations throughout the deployment including maritime surveillance and navigational preparations, an official from Dixmude told Jane's during a visit to ship while it was berthed at RSS-Singapura – Changi Naval Base.

Dixmude began its Jeanne d'Arc task force mission in February 2018 and is expected to complete its deployment in July. The mission includes port visits in India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Vietnam. Accompanying Dixmude throughout the mission is the La Fayette-class guided-missile frigate, FNS Surcouf (F 7111).

The S-100 UAS completed qualification flights for the Mistral class in mid-2017. Incidentally the flights, which involved about 30 sorties and 15 hours of airborne time, were conducted on Dixmude between May and June that year.

The Camcopter vehicle features a two-blade main rotor, a streamlined pod and boom fuselage, a dorsal tailfin, and a three-point undercarriage. The unmanned vehicle has a maximum take-off weight of 220 kg, and a maximum payload of 100 kg including fuel and sensors. It has a service ceiling of 18,000 ft, an endurance of 10 hours when fitted with an external fuel tank, and a never-exceed speed of 120 kt.