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Thales, Schiebel complete S-100 UAS flight trials



Thales UK and Schiebel have undertaken first UK flight trials of a new shipborne multisensor unmanned aircraft system (UAS) developed to meet emerging requirements for persistent over-the-horizon surveillance.

Leveraging Schiebel's Camcopter S-100 vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) UAS, the two companies have developed an end-to-end maritime intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition, and reconnaissance (ISTAR) solution designed to detect, fix, track, and identify surface threats such as fast inshore attack craft or waterborne improvised explosive devices. Initial flight testing with the multipayload system – including both radar and electro-optical/infrared (EO/IR) sensors – was undertaken in west Wales during August 2021.

Thales and Schiebel announced in June that their teaming to pursue opportunities in the maritime UAS sector, with an initial focus on the UK market. According to Matt Moore, Thales business development lead for maritime air autonomy, the teaming with Schiebel reflects emerging customer requirements for more capable maritime UASs offering a wide area surveillance capability.

“The market is increasingly looking for a detect function, which effectively mandates a maritime radar,” Moore told Janes. “Our I-Master radar, integrated onto the S-100 air vehicle, embodies a maritime mode set to deliver wide area surveillance at sea.

“Alongside I-Master, we have baselined the IAI [Israel Aerospace Industries] POPUltra EO/IR payload for identification and observation, together with AIS [automatic identification system] and IFF [identification friend-or-foe].”

Thales and Schiebel have also worked to address the fusion, management, and dissemination of the ISTAR product, as well as its integration into a ship combat management system (CMS) environment.