

French ministry for Armed Forces selects Airbus Survey Copter Aliaca fixed-wing drone systems to equip its ships

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Paris, 11th February 2021 – Airbus Defence and Space mini UAS subsidiary SURVEY Copter signed a contract with French DGA Armament general directorate to provide the French Navy with 11 systems, (22 aircraft), of the electrically powered fixed-wing Aliaca maritime version UAS (officially called SMDM / “Systèmes de Mini Drones aériens embarqués pour la Marine” by French authorities), including training and integrated logistic support. First deliveries are expected in 2021.

“We are honored to contribute to the missions of the French Navy which we will support with the highest standards of quality and reliability. This new contract strengthens SURVEY Copter’s position as a global key player for maritime mini UAS”, said Nicolas Askamp, Head of Survey Copter / Airbus Unmanned Aerial Systems.

The Aliaca maritime UAS is a high endurance versatile system allowing up to 3 hours missions over a 50 km (27 Nm) range, perfectly adapted to maritime missions with high gyro stabilized EO/IR payload performances and qualified to operate in severe environmental conditions. Launched by catapult, the Aliaca maritime UAS concludes its flight by landing automatically using a dedicated net landing solution. With a length of 2,2m and a wingspan of 3,6m for a maximum take-off weight of 16 kg, the Aliaca maritime UAS benefits from a powerful yet silent electric motor. The system can be deployed easily and rapidly in less than 15 minutes by 2 operators only.

Similarly, the “user-friendly” ground control station enables the operator to constantly monitor the automatic flight of the UAS while receiving in real-time day and night images and AIS (Automatic Identification System) data gathered by its on-board sensors.

It is designed to conduct several types of missions around the ships, including increasing the understanding of the tactical situation, control of illegal operations at sea, search-and-rescue, traffic monitoring, pollution detection, tracking of any suspicious behaviour in the ship environment and coastal surveillance.

This light on-board aerial solution gives the opportunity to vessels, traditionally not equipped with aerial assets, to enhance their tactical ISR capabilities, support decision making and reactivity in operations.

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The Aliaca maritime UAS can easily be integrated on board any ships, with or without helicopter landing-deck, and its small logistic footprint enables operations and storage on board smaller sized ships. Its integration does not require heavy on-board modification nor storage of specific fuel.

The result of 10 years of R&D investments and on-board experimentations, SURVEY Copter's "off the shelf" Aliaca maritime UAS is a robust and resistant system to the corrosive maritime environment, an adapted solution to the electro-magnetic constraints on board, and benefits from an efficient net recovery system, fully automated, meaning that no human action is required during the recovery phase.

About Survey Copter

Expert in mini-UAV since 1996, Survey Copter became an Airbus subsidiary in 2011. Survey Copter is offering a wide range of products ideally adapted to perform ISR, protection or monitoring missions, for military and civil applications as well. It provides global competences in systems development including aerial platform, ground control station, autopilot, data link, encryption, EO/IR payload (GX-5), RVT (Remote Video Terminal) as well as a provision of comprehensive services including spare parts, trainings and in service support.

About Airbus

Airbus is a global leader in aeronautics, space and related services. In 2019, it generated revenues of € 70 billion and employed a workforce of around 135,000. Airbus offers the most comprehensive range of passenger airliners. Airbus is also a European leader providing tanker, combat, transport and mission aircraft, as well as one of the world's leading space companies. In helicopters, Airbus provides the most efficient civil and military rotorcraft solutions worldwide.

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