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French Army to Trial Schiebel's Camcopter S-100 UAV

The French Army will lease the Camcopter S-100, an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) produced by Austrian company Schiebel, for experimental trials under a contract awarded by the French defence procurement agency DGA.

The trials will analyse the advantages of a VTOL (vertical take-off and landing) craft as well as the Thales Optronics Agile 2 electro optical and infrared (EO/IR) sensor.

Thales Aeronautical Systems, as a subcontractor to Schiebel, will assist the army in arranging and organising the flight and frequency permits.

Schiebel's Camcopter S-100 UAV is a combat-proven military UAV that does not require supporting launch or recovery equipment and can operate day and night in any atmospheric conditions on land and at sea with a beyond line-of-sight capability to 200km.

The aerial vehicle has a payload capacity of 75lb and provides long endurance for over six hours at a service ceiling of 18,000ft.

The unmanned helicopter will also be leased for two weeks of demanding trials for the French Navy.

The experimental trials are scheduled for the first half of 2010.