

Camcopter S-100 completes French Navy trials



Schiebel's Camcopter S-100 UAS has tested its maritime capabilities onboard the new Gowind class OPV (Offshore Patrol Vessel), L'ADROIT, built by DCNS.

A series of flights were performed successfully during the trials, according to a Schiebel company statement issued 29 November 2011.

L'ADROIT was handed over to the French Navy in October 2011, and is the first ship ever to be specifically designed to operate UAVs.

According to Schiebel, during the four days of operation in the Bay of Biscay, the Camcopter carried out 11 flights and 89 deck landings using a harpoon developed by Schiebel. As part of the trials, the S-100 used its electro-optical and infrared sensors to identify exercise potential threats such as small boats.

It was shown that the UAS significantly increases the capability of the ship and the missions conducted during the trials demonstrated its high potential for surveillance, harbour and coastal patrol, environmental protection, intelligence gathering, drug interdiction, anti-piracy tasks, as well as supporting search and rescue operations.

L'ADRIOT was designed to carry a UAV and was fitted out to accommodate the Camcopter S-100 onboard. Schiebel believes that embarking a tactical rotary UAS such as the Camcopter S-100 onboard such a ship will provide a step-change in its surveillance and reconnaissance capability in the future.

'The missions conducted during these trials aptly illustrate this enormous potential. Given the fact that many navies seem to be focusing more on procuring smaller ships for future operations, coupled with the fact that indigenous manned helicopters are often too expensive, opens the door for UAS, such as the S-100. This potential capability gap in terms of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) is where the S-100 fits in,' the company said.