

Coast Guard acquires four MQ-9B long-range UAVs



WASHINGTON – The U.S. Coast Guard placed a \$247.8 million order with General Atomics for four MQ-9B long-range unmanned aircraft systems, ground control stations and supporting equipment Sept. 25, 2026, through a U.S. Customs and Border Protection contract.

The aircraft will give the Coast Guard greater ability to monitor offshore waters, protect borders and critical infrastructure, support search and rescue, combat drug trafficking and counter illegal and unregulated fishing. They will also improve the service's ability to collect and share intelligence, conduct surveillance and support reconnaissance missions far at sea.

"The MQ-9B long-range unmanned aircraft systems will expand our reach and strengthen our ability to protect the nation," said Anthony Antognoli, the assistant commandant and program executive officer for robotics and autonomous systems. "This investment will give Coast Guard crews a longer-range view of our maritime domain, helping them detect threats earlier, make better-informed decisions and act faster across our missions."

Long-range unmanned aircraft are vital to Coast Guard missions. In fiscal year 2026, U.S. Customs and Border Protection MQ-9A aircraft operating as part of Joint Interagency Task Force South directly contributed to the seizure of approximately 60,700 pounds of illegal drugs valued at \$306 million and the apprehension of around 20 smugglers.

The MQ-9B acquisition is funded by the historic investment in the Coast Guard through fiscal year 2025 budget reconciliation and fiscal year 2026 appropriations. Fiscal year 2025 budget

reconciliation provided nearly \$25 billion, the largest capital investment in the service's history, through which the Coast Guard ordered approximately \$16.3 billion in new assets and capabilities. This rapid return on investment demonstrates the Coast Guard's commitment to modernizing acquisitions, integrating next-generation technology, restoring readiness and revitalizing infrastructure to deliver national mission outcomes.

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