

Sea Machines, Metal Shark to Supply Coast Guard R&D Center With New Autonomous Vessel



The U.S. Coast Guard's Research and Development Center is evaluating the Sharktech 29 Defiant autonomous vessel. SEA MACHINES ROBOTICS

NEW LONDON, Conn. – Boston-based Sea Machines Robotics has partnered with shipbuilder Metal Shark Boats, of Jeanerette, Louisiana, to supply the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)'s Research and Development Center (RDC) with a new Sharktech 29 Defiant vessel for the purposes of testing and evaluating the capabilities of available autonomous vessel technology, Sea Machines announced in a Sept. 29 release. The 29-foot, welded-aluminum monohull pilothouse vessel comes equipped with the Sea Machines SM300 autonomous-command and remote-helm control technology, offering the USCG capabilities including transit autonomy, collaborative autonomy, collision avoidance and remote vessel monitoring.

The RDC helps transition innovative technologies and provides premier analysis and decision support to enhance operational performance across all Coast Guard missions. During demonstrations scheduled for October off the coast of Hawaii, the RDC team will test and evaluate the Sharktech vessel's autonomous capabilities for their potential in supporting USCG surveillance, interdiction, patrol and other missions. Following the Hawaii demonstrations, the autonomous vessel will be returned to the RDC's New London facility, where it will be used in additional testing to investigate application to various Coast Guard missions.

"As the premier USCG facility performing research, development, test and evaluation in support of the service's

major missions, the RDC team is eager to observe Sea Machines' system in action," said USCG's Derek Meier, assistant demonstration director. "The exercises will ultimately help us determine how, when and if this innovative technology can be used to support personnel who are executing a variety of Coast Guard activities."

"Sea Machines is proud to actively support government agencies across a variety of projects and to expand that support to the Department of Homeland Security with this important demonstration being conducted by the U.S. Coast Guard," said Sea Machines' Phil Bourque, director of sales. "Our systems are being rapidly adopted by government and commercial operators alike, offering increases in on-water productivity and predictability, while reducing operational risk."

"Since the launch of our Sharktech Autonomous Vessels division in 2018 we have been working to position Metal Shark for the autonomy revolution," said Chris Allard, Metal Shark's chief executive officer. "We are committed to the advancement of autonomous technology, through our relationships with leading autonomy suppliers as well as through our own R&D, and we are engaged with multiple customers, from the USCG, the Department of Defense and commercial operators. With this latest delivery, Metal Shark is proud to play a role in the Coast Guard's autonomous technology R&D efforts."

In 2019, Sea Machines partnered with Metal Shark to make available the Sharktech 29 Defiant vessel to commercial markets, under Metal Shark's stock boat program. Most recently, in July, Sea Machines partnered with Huntington Ingalls Industries to accelerate the deployment of self-piloting technologies in the rising market of unmanned naval boats and ships.