# Task Group 59.1 Conducts Digital Talon 3.0

241105-A-BO737-1011 U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (Nov. 5, 2024) An unmanned aerial vehicle, operated by U.S. Naval Forces Central Command's Task Force 59, prepares for launch on an unmanned surface vessel during exercise Digital Talon 3.0 in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. (Official U.S. Army photo)

By Commander U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Public Affairs | November 24, 2024

MANAMA, Bahrain –Task Group (TG) 59.1 conducted the third iteration of exercise Digital Talon in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations, Nov. 5.

Known as Digital Talon 3.0, the exercise tested the electronic and mechanical effectiveness of robotics and autonomous systems (RAS), the capabilities of over-the-horizon communications between unmanned systems, and testing aerial

autonomous launch and recovery of an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) off a unmanned surface vessel (USV).

Lt. Luis Echeverria, commanding officer of TG 59.1, said Digital Talon 3.0 expanded the over-the-horizon capabilities of these unmanned systems.

“Under Digital Talon 3.0 we were able to test the remote launch of a loitering munition, and vertical take-off and landing of UAVs from a USV,” said Echeverria. “These evolutions resulted in the successful remote launch of a loitering munition at sea.”

Commander, Special Operations Forces Central Command, the Avenger-class mine countermeasures ship USS Devastator (MCM 6) and the U.S. Coast Guard Sentinel-class fast response cutter USCGC Emlen Tunnell (WPC 1145) also participated in Digital Talon 3.0.

The first Digital Talon exercise, held in October 2023, and the second iteration a month later, advanced lethality and kinetic applications for unmanned systems. Digital Talon 3.0 examined more advanced tactics, according to TG 59.1’s executive officer, Royal Navy Lt. Samuel Hendy.

“As with all pioneering ventures and first-of-its-kind feats, there are plenty of challenges to overcome, lessons to be analyzed, but we are a learning organization and it all combines to further benefit 5th Fleets’ understanding and employment of this state-of-the-art warfare,” Hendy said. “If there is one thing we can take away, Digital Talon 3.0 affirms that the U.S. Navy, as well as her partner nations, remains at the forefront of cutting-edge unmanned system integration and deployment.”

Established in January 2024, Task Group 59.1, dubbed “The Pioneers,” tests industry solutions and focuses on the operational deployment of unmanned systems teamed with manned operators to bolster maritime security across the Middle East

region. TG 59.1 reports directly to Task Force 59, the Navy’s first Unmanned and Artificial Intelligence Task Force. TF 59 integrates unmanned systems and artificial intelligence with maritime operations in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations to support maritime security and stability in the Middle East region. It has tested, upgraded, evolved and operated with more than 23 different unmanned systems.

U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/U.S. 5th Fleet’s area of operations encompasses about 2.5 million square miles of water area and includes the Arabian Gulf, Red Sea, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea and parts of the Indian Ocean. This expanse, comprising 21 nations, includes three critical choke points at the Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal and the Strait of Bab al Mandeb.