U.S. Navy UAS surpass one million hours in ISR operations



A Textron MQ-19 Aerosonde Unmanned Aircraft system is launched from the expeditionary sea base USS Hershel “Woody” Williams. (U.S. Navy photo)

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NAS PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The Navy and Marine Corps Small Tactical Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) program office (PMA-263) recently announced that the Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) Services UAS surpassed one million flight hours in support of operations on land and at sea.

Sailors aboard achieved the one million flight hours milestone during routine mission support in the 6th Fleet.

Since the program's inception in 2005, PMA-263 has successfully completed more than 50 UAS installations aboard Navy and Military Sealift Command (MSC) ships and operated from more than 50 land-based locations worldwide. The ISR Services team ensures ships in the 4th, 5th,6th and 7th fleets, as well as land-based operations worldwide are equipped to provide day and night ISR support to joint force and coalition partners.

"Every hour flown represents more than mission success – it reflects the resilience of our people, the trust of our partners and the impact we've had on history," said Gregg Skinner, PMA-263 program manager. "Together, we've supported operations in every corner of the globe, advanced unmanned systems into the fight, and stood ready in times of uncertainty"

Currently, more than a dozen ships are equipped with ISR Services UAS, enabling naval vessels to deploy and retrieve aircraft in support of missions. Sea- and land-based systems include the Boeing Insitu MQ-27 ScanEagle and the Textron MQ-19 Aerosonde, both delivering unique capabilities to the warfighter. They provide day and night surveillance, supporting around the clock mission support.

The UAS installations are optimized to facilitate the seamless transfer of full-motion video and other sensor data to personnel in critical locations. The information gathered by these systems plays a vital role in tactical operational decision-making and long-term intelligence gathering, enhancing the Navy and Marine Corps' ability to maintain maritime domain awareness and operational readiness.

PMA-263 manages a portfolio of small unmanned systems for U.S. and international partners and leads training operations for

all service branches.