

Unmanned Surface Vessel Transits Strait of Hormuz with U.S. Coast Guard



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MANAMA, Bahrain – An unmanned surface vessel from U.S. 5th Fleet transited the Strait of Hormuz with two U.S. Coast Guard cutters, April 19, demonstrating the continued operational integration of unmanned and artificial intelligence systems by U.S. maritime forces in the Middle East.

USCGC Charles Moulthrop (WPC 1141) and USCGC John Scheuerman (WPC 1146) transited one of the world's most strategically important straits with an L3 Harris Arabian Fox MAST-13 unmanned surface vessel. The three vessels sailed south from the Arabian Gulf and through the narrow Strait of Hormuz before entering the Gulf of Oman.

"I am proud to be a part of this great partnership between the U.S. Coast Guard and Navy in the Middle East. We often work side-by-side as one team with a common mission to provide security and safeguard the seas," said Lt. Trent Moon, John Scheuerman's commanding officer.

U.S. 5th Fleet established a unit called Task Force 59 in September 2021 to integrate unmanned systems and artificial

intelligence into regional maritime operations. Since its launch, the task force has deployed a suite of new unmanned systems from operational hubs in Jordan and Bahrain.

In December, Task Force 59 launched an AeroVel Flexrotor unmanned aerial vehicle from USCGC Emlen Tunnell (WPC 1145) while operating in the Arabian Gulf. The launch marked Task Force 59's first from a U.S. Coast Guard vessel at the time.

"We are on the cutting-edge of integrating advanced unmanned technology into our maritime patrols. Our crews are excited to help lead these efforts with our Navy counterparts," said Lt. Stephen Hills, Charles Moulthropé's commanding officer.

U.S. 5th Fleet is leading regional efforts to increase vigilance in surrounding waters that include more than 5,000 miles of coastline from the Suez Canal, around the Arabian Peninsula, through the Strait of Hormuz and into the Arabian Gulf. The integration of unmanned platforms and sensors alongside crewed ships from the United States and regional partners enhances this capability.

The two Coast Guard cutters and Arabian Fox transited the Strait of Hormuz while operating in support of the International Maritime Security Construct, an 11-nation coalition led by the United States that focuses on maritime operations near key waterways in the Middle East.