

U.S. Navy Sets New Milestone with First-Ever Submerged Launch and Recovery of Underwater Drone

In a landmark achievement for modern naval warfare, the U.S. Navy has successfully launched and recovered an unmanned underwater vehicle (UUV) from a fully submerged submarine without any diver intervention. This historic operation, conducted by the Virginia-class submarine USS Delaware, marks a significant step forward in the integration of autonomous systems into undersea missions.

The centerpiece of this operation was the Yellow Moray, an advanced variant of the REMUS 600, designed for long-duration and deep-sea operations. Over the course of three consecutive missions, each lasting up to ten hours, the drone demonstrated its capabilities in mine detection, seafloor mapping, and tactical surveillance in environments considered too hazardous for human divers.

Notably, the launch and recovery were executed entirely while the submarine remained submerged. The UUV was deployed through a standard torpedo tube and later recovered all without surfacing or compromising the vessel's stealth. This innovation represents a breakthrough in underwater deployment tactics, enabling submarines to operate unmanned systems covertly and with increased operational efficiency.

Vice Admiral Rob Gaucher emphasized the significance of this advancement. "This capability allows us to expand the reach of our submarines by integrating unmanned systems that can access both shallower and deeper waters than manned platforms," he said. "Delaware is just the beginning of a broader transformation in how we operate beneath the surface."

The successful deployment of the Yellow Moray is being described as a strategic inflection point for undersea warfare. By incorporating autonomous vehicles into submarine operations, the Navy enhances its ability to conduct reconnaissance, neutralize threats, and gather intelligence all while reducing risks to personnel.

This milestone reflects the Navy's ongoing commitment to innovation and technological superiority in increasingly contested maritime environments. As global competition intensifies beneath the waves, the integration of UUVs like the Yellow Moray positions the United States at the forefront of next-generation naval capability.