



World's Only Autonomous Underwater & Surface Vehicle (AUSV)

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Ocean Aero Triton's Minesweepers are ready now

The unique Surface-Subsurface AUSVs can help clear the Strait of Hormuz.

By Ocean Aero on March 25, 2026 10:01 am [Share](#)


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Photo courtesy of Ocean Aero.

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Each passing day, the team at [Ocean Aero](#) watches their screens like all Americans as the de facto closure of the Strait of Hormuz unfolds. While acknowledging the threat of Iranian missiles and drones, the builders of the Triton AUSV look on with anticipation, knowing that the autonomous drones they build can help, and help now. Already armed with minesweeping payloads and tested globally including places like the Black Sea, the Tritons have a role to play in maritime security.

"Triton is an ideal mine counter-measure device," Kevin Decker, Ocean Aero's CEO affirms. "It already has vetted mine counter-measure payloads. It has more endurance than other unmanned assets, can home in underwater for detailed views, and doesn't require humans to travel out to sea to launch. We need to find and clear those mines in the Strait of Hormuz. We can deploy them right now. America has the technology. We should use it."



Triton is the world's only wind and solar-powered Autonomous Underwater and Surface Vehicle (AUSV). The nearly 15 foot-long, 1,500 pound (680 kg) Triton can autonomously sail and submerge while carrying payloads ranging from intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) to communications, anti-submarine warfare (ASW), maritime strike, and mine counter-measures (MCM).

Capable of launch/recovery from shore, ship, or air, the Triton can patrol on the surface for 30 days or more. When needed, it can retract its sail, dive down to 328 feet (100m) and remain submerged for 10-plus days.

Once underwater, it can bring to bear a mine-detection sensor suite including high resolution video cameras, thermal imaging, side-scan sonars, and others, all to develop a visualization of the sea-floor and water column, inclusive of mines. An additional payload is in the last stages of testing that can then neutralize mines via onboard effectors, mini-UUVs and wireless detonation gear.

Triton is not a theoretical capability. The U.S. Navy has been evaluating and operating it since 2023 and has done so in the very waters Iran is now disrupting. Tritons are ready to deploy today and could be autonomously, persistently, and stealthily working the mine clearance problem in the Strait of Hormuz in the span of a week.

At Work In The Strait of Hormuz

The U.S. Navy's previous experience with Tritons has been consistent and growing. The Navy previewed the AUSV's capability during exercises in 2023, when several Tritons operated with Task Force 59 in the Persian Gulf as part of maritime situational awareness experiments.

At the time, Ocean Aero's President of Global Operations, Oscar Rojas, was an active-duty Commodore in command of Task Force 52, the unit responsible for the U.S. 5th Fleet's mine countermeasures mission and the progenitor of Task Force 59. He recalls that then 5th Fleet commander, VADM Cooper (now CENTCOM commander) had a vision for unmanned technology in the Persian Gulf.

"He saw the value in unmanned systems closing gaps where traditional assets were not readily available."

Such a gap exists right now. Two of three Littoral Combat Ships previously assigned to Middle Eastern minesweeping duties left the area some time prior to the opening of Operation Epic Fury, taking their MCM capability with them.

It's a capability void that Rojas says Tritons could "absolutely" step in to fill. Rojas, who is currently in Eastern Europe supporting Triton operations in the Black Sea, adds a crucial point to the potential of operating the AUSV in the Strait of Hormuz. Triton is survivable.



Photo courtesy of Ocean Aero.

"The current operational picture in the Middle East, the Black Sea and, really, everywhere, is that anything on the surface is at risk from being neutralized by adversaries. We're seeing it with the ships Iran has destroyed. The fact that Triton is a surface/subsurface

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vessel brings down significant risk from adversary activity. [By diving] it is still able to complete its task, being able to search, identify, and neutralize sea mines.”

The ability to dive could allow Triton to avoid detection and fast-moving pop-up threats from Iranian small boats, staying in the hunt for mines when other systems (surface ships with towed MCM payloads, mine-hunting helicopters, shallow-depth sonar cylinders) may have to be pulled back or put at risk. Even on the surface, Tritons would prove difficult for Iran to detect and target.

A ten foot span from the waterline to the top of its sail presents a minuscule radar cross-section which effectively vanishes at distances greater than a quarter-mile while Triton's small visual signature adds to its stealth. Its autonomous navigation capability using a hybrid of acoustic, visual, and other systems also allows it to avoid detection before adversary sensors or platforms get too close.

Triton-enabled mine location and clearance could open safe passageways in the Strait. It could also provide CENTCOM the data to share with commercial shippers/insurers and the media to prove the Strait is navigable. That assurance is worth hundreds of billions to the global economy.

Sam Adcock, executive vice president of Washington DC-based advisory firm, Crossroads Strategies, has followed Ocean Aero's Triton development for over five years, watching the Navy's systematic evaluation of the system in the Persian Gulf, West Africa, the Black Sea and the Gulf of America. He asserts that in the current crisis, it's time to put the platform to work.

“World events disrupt the best laid plans. In this instance, TRITON is the answer to the most pressing world problem!”

On-Watch in the Waters of Gulfport

From his satellite office in Houston, Kevin Decker observes that the Port of Gulfport, Mississippi is currently safe from surface and underwater security threats.

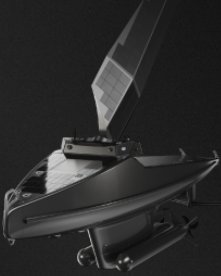
“I can say with certainty that there is not espionage or sabotage placed at the bottom of the Port of Gulfport,” he affirms, “because I checked this morning and I've checked twice a week for the past nine months. I can't say the same thing for the ports of New York City, Los Angeles, Houston, or Seattle. In an era of conflict and sea mining, that needs to change.”



Photo courtesy of Ocean Aero.


Decker has been able to remotely keep tabs on Gulfport via live video and data feeds from the Triton now stationed there. Gulfport became the first Port in the world to implement continuous autonomous subsea surveillance in May, 2025 with the advent of Triton operations. One AUSV does a full, three-sensor scan of the port twice a week, ensuring that the harbor is secure and ready to operate, free of waterborne threats or spying.

The Triton assigned to Gulfport carries bathymetry, side-scan sonar, and magnetometer payloads to produce high-resolution comparative data sets for real-time change detection. It offers the ability to spot irregularities in both port traffic and infrastructure, a feature that Port CEO and Executive Director, Jon Nass, says has the potential to save the Port millions.



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In addition to an array of commercial freight and passenger operations, Gulfport hosts the Naval Construction Battalion Center Gulfport, home to the U.S. Atlantic Fleet Seabees. Its location on the northern Gulf of America, 18 miles from the open Gulf waters makes it strategically important and in 2015 it was designated a Strategic Seaport by the Commander, Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command.

Gulfport's adoption of autonomous surface/subsurface surveillance using Triton sets a replicable precedent for other ports which must address the glaring security gaps it covers.

Gulfport is also home to Ocean Aero's headquarters and manufacturing operation, a 63,000 square-foot facility that can produce up to 360 Tritons per year. Annex options adjacent to the facility have the potential to enable production of an additional 1,000 per year while overseas production, particularly in Eastern Europe and Ukraine could increase output further.

The security that Triton is providing at Gulfport is more relevant than ever. Even rare instances of sabotage can have potentially massive impact, Sam Adcock recently noted.

Adcock's research shows there have been five serious instances of destruction or sabotage of undersea infrastructure (cables, oil pipelines, power transmission lines, etc.) worldwide since 2004. Disturbingly, four of these five incidents have occurred since 2022.



Photo courtesy of Ocean Aero.

"Are our shipping lanes into and out of U.S. commercial ports at risk from such threats?" Adcock asks. "What if the ultimate objective was to impede movement of the U.S. Navy's fleet from Norfolk, VA or San Diego, CA? Perhaps more troubling, what if it was targeting the seabed outside of Kings Bay, GA or Puget Sound, WA?"

Infrastructure Risks, Including in the Persian Gulf, Call for Triton

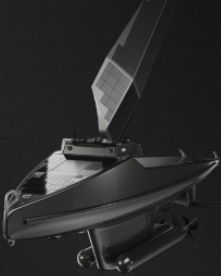
The same long endurance, low-profile, surface/subsurface, and modular payload qualities that make Triton a potential mine-warfare game-changer in the Strait of Hormuz translate to the threat to undersea infrastructure there and in the rest of the world.

"One of the things that hasn't gotten much airtime, and maybe for good reason," Oscar Rojas points out, "is the [risk to] critical underwater infrastructure in the Persian Gulf area."

While Rojas commanded the Task Force, CTF-52 conducted extensive hydrographic surveys of the Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab al-Mandeb Strait. "There is so much critical infrastructure in that area," he observes, "You can't just go blow-up sea mines that may be in these zones because you could potentially sever vitally important lines of communication. It's not as easy as blow-and-go to get rid of sea mines."


Tritons could simultaneously detect mines in the Gulf and quickly map spots where neutralization has to be delicately undertaken. The AUSVs' persistent underwater and surface capability would aid greatly while providing awareness of possible Iranian infrastructure sabotage efforts in the waterway and surrounding ports.

Decker and Rojas refer to Ocean Aero's Triton as an "unblinking eye". The time to focus it on the Persian Gulf is now.



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A promotional graphic for Ocean Aero's Triton ASV. It features a dark, sleek autonomous surface/subsurface vehicle (ASV) floating on the water's surface at night. The text "Autonomously Find & Engage Threats Above & Below The Water, TODAY." is prominently displayed in white. Below the text is a "Contact Us" button and the Ocean Aero logo, which consists of a stylized 'A' inside a circle.

Topics: anti-submarine warfare, autonomous boats, Autonomous Underwater and Surface Vehicle (AUSV), Kevin Decker, mine clearing, mine countermeasures, Navy, Ocean Aero, Operation Epic Fury, persian gulf, Presented by Ocean Aero, Sponsored Content, Strait of Hormuz, Triton, unmanned systems

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