

ABSTRACT

SYSTEM FOR AUTOMATICALLY LAUNCHING AND RETRIEVING AN
UNDERWATER DRONE

The present invention relates to systems for launching and retrieving underwater craft from a ship.

It consists mainly of a handling cradle for launching and retrieving an underwater vehicle, comprising a frame forming a dorsal ridge and providing an interface between lifting means, a crane for example, and the underwater vehicle. This frame comprises:

- means for adjusting the overall buoyancy;
- means for automatically aligning the vehicle with the dorsal ridge formed by the frame;
- means for grasping the vehicle from the surface after the frame has been aligned with the vehicle.

In a preferred embodiment, the cradle comprises an onboard video camera enabling the operator onboard the ship to ensure that the vehicle attachment and release operations are carried out correctly.

The invention advantageously allows the vehicle to be launched and retrieved automatically when the vehicle is under the surface in an area where it is not subject to the effects of the swell.



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