The Rise of Group 13: The Birth of a Navy Without Ships

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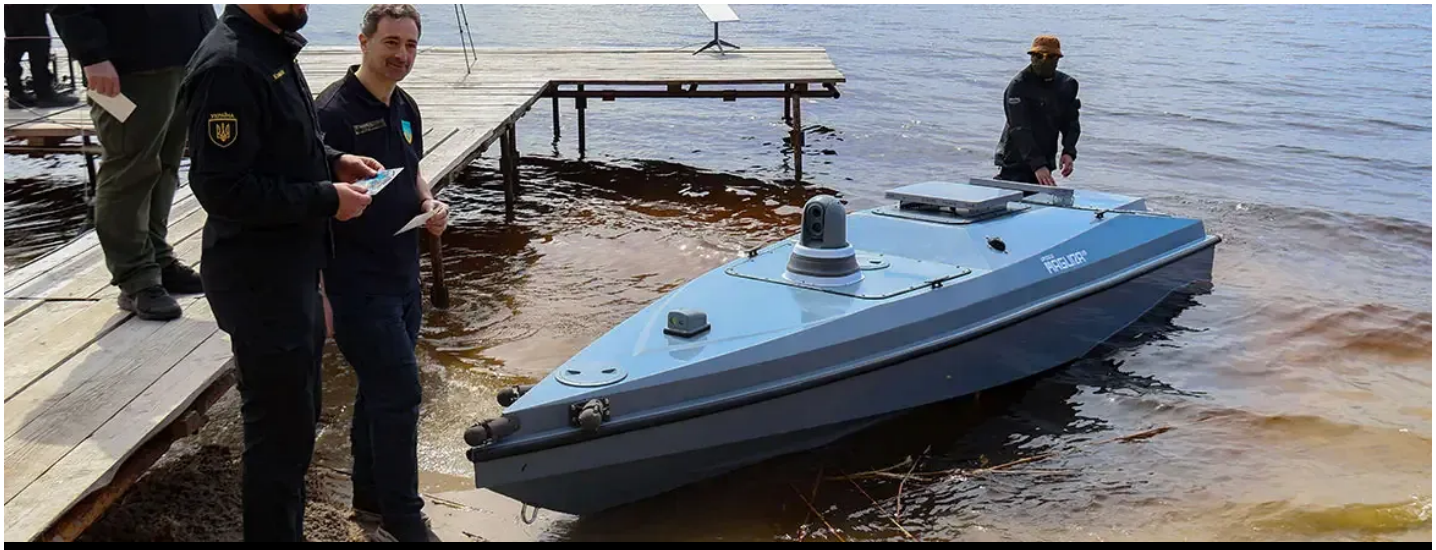
The annexation of Crimea in 2014 left Ukraine almost devoid of a conventional fleet, but the 2022 invasion prompted military intelligence (HUR) to a radical response: the creation of **Group 13**. Under the command of the enigmatic officer known as **"Thirteenth"**, this elite unit turned weakness into an unpredictable asymmetric advantage. Operating in the shadows of anonymous hangars, the group does not manage large frigates but coordinates swarms of marine drones to hunt down Russian targets of immense strategic value. The unit's philosophy is purely economic and lethal: using low-cost means, about **250,000 dollars**, to annihilate enemy assets exceeding **65 million dollars**. This strategy has allowed Kyiv to contest the dominance of the Black Sea without possessing a single large warship, marking the definitive transition from the era of battleships to that of autonomous systems.



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Magura V5 and the "Wolfpack" Tactic

The operational heart of Group 13 is the **Magura V5**, a 5.5-meter-long surface drone (USV) that represents a masterpiece of stealth and military engineering. Thanks to its extremely low hydrodynamic profile, the Magura glides over the waves, almost invisible to Russian radars and night watchmen. The unit has perfected the **"wolfpack"** tactic, a coordinated attack method where multiple drones simultaneously strike the same target from different angles. In high-profile missions, such as the one that led to the sinking of the patrol ship *Sergey Kotov* or the corvette *Ivanovets*, the first drones often act as decoys to saturate enemy defenses or hit propulsion systems, immobilizing the prey. Once the ship is stationary and vulnerable, the subsequent drones aim with surgical precision at the hull's weak points, often repeatedly hitting the same breach until causing the final sinking, all documented in real-time by onboard cameras for psychological warfare purposes.

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The Evolution of the Conflict: From the Black Sea to the Mediterranean

The impact of Group 13 has been so devastating that it triggered a strategic retreat of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, forcing Moscow to move its most valuable assets from Sevastopol to the port of Novorossiysk, hundreds of kilometers away. But the unit did not stop at coastal defense; it began equipping its drones with air-to-air missiles **R-73** and **AIM-9**, transforming them into mobile air defense platforms capable of shooting down Russian helicopters hunting USVs. Recently, the audacity of Group 13 has reached unimaginable geographical boundaries, with reported attacks against the Russian "shadow fleet" of tankers even in the waters of the **Mediterranean Sea**, nearly 2,000 km from Ukrainian bases. This global projection capability, combined with the use of long-range drones like the **Beaver** to strike refineries in the heart of Russia, demonstrates that Group 13 is not only protecting Kyiv's coasts but is exerting constant pressure on the entire logistical and economic system of the Kremlin.