

RNZN opts to use ECPINS W software for Project Protectors

■ BY TIM FISH

KEY POINTS

- Replacement software complies with NATO standards
- ECPINS will feature local military grid references for Australia and New Zealand

The Royal New Zealand Navy (RNZN) is to enhance its new Project Protector vessels with ECPINS W (Electronic Chart Precise Integrated Navigation System) software from OSI Geospatial.

The new software, which will replace the current ECPINS M package, constitutes a WECDIS (Warship Electronic Display and Information System) fit compliant with NATO standardisation agreements.

A spokesperson from Canada-based OSI Geospatial told *Jane's* that the RNZN already has the licences for the software upgrade and "will be rolling it out over the next few months".

ECPINS W will upgrade the monitoring, navigation and mapping systems to provide increased situational awareness, aid forward-planning processes and remove communications discrepancies between the ship and outside operators.

The WECDIS MIL-STD-2525 marine information object sets use NATO symbology to simplify the on-screen picture of contacts and further identify their intent; using colours and symbols without the

need to resort to further queries for each target.

WECDIS also uses advanced fixing techniques in littoral areas. When a ship is close to land the system uses two objects in-line for plotting its location in an environment where GPS can be unreliable or subject to local jamming devices.

ECPINS W has an operator contact distance alarm to predict the possible location of targets.

Jim Davison, sales manager at OSI Geospatial, told *Jane's* that an example of its application could be when intelligence reports from ashore have provided details of an enemy vessel's movement from port. ECPINS W uses the data to calculate the approximate location of the contact and can give a warning if the target comes within a specified distance.

Other applications include a position discrepancy monitor that uses data from a number of navigational systems, such as a ship's inertial navigation system or GPS, and displays it all on one chart. "It is useful for checking the ship's location during periods when there could be outside jamming interference," Davison said. "If one positioning system is jammed you can also view the others to confirm where you are."

ECPINS W can display local military grid-referencing systems – the Australian Map Grid and New Zealand Map Grid – which are more

accurate than using just longitude and latitude.

"In local areas sometimes there are map conditions that fit the earth better, and these can be used by ECPINS W," said Davison. "This is important because, for example, a spotter on land directing shore bombardment will be using local military grid referencing and does not have time to convert to the ship's system."

Using ECPINS W the ship is able to use the same grid referencing as its land contact and by "talking the same language" it can aid in the identification of disembarkation points for amphibious forces and improve gunnery accuracy.

The system also provides assistance to the navigator when in harbour, giving information for the application of the rudder when travelling at various speeds in a confined environment. It uses advanced geometric drawing tools.

The Project Protector fleet recapitalisation project comprises seven vessels, made up of an 8,870-ton multirole vessel, two 1,600-ton offshore patrol vessels and four 340-ton inshore patrol vessels, which should all be delivered by the end of 2008. All seven are to be fitted with ECPINS W.

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IAF negotiates more Hawk AJTs with BAE Systems

BAE Systems is in negotiations with the Indian government for a second batch of 57 Hawk Mk 132 advanced jet trainer (AJT) aircraft, writes *Michael J Gething*.

Mike Rudd, business development director of Hawk International, revealed that the Indian Air Force (IAF) is looking at a further 40 aircraft and that the Indian Navy wants 17 Hawk Mk 132 AJTs.

Rudd said that more than 900 Hawks (of all versions) had been sold worldwide and that pilots from 25 nations have been trained on the type. This includes pilots from the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF) who have attended the NATO Flying Training College (NFTC) in Canada to develop their fast-jet skills on the Hawk before transitioning to their frontline aircraft, including F-16C/Ds.

The RSAF is conducting a procurement evaluation for a new AJT but under the terms of the Request for Information (Rfi), none of the potential bidders are allowed to reveal details.

However, it is widely believed that the Hawk AJT, together with Alenia Aermacchi's M-346 and the Korean Aerospace Industries/Lockheed Martin T-50 Golden Eagle, are in contention. While both the Hawk's rivals were flying at the Singapore Airshow 2008, the Hawk's arrival was delayed by weather en route, although it did make its demonstration flights in-country later.

A formal Request for Proposals is expected later this year with final selection anticipated late in 2009 or 2010. The RSAF is understood to be looking at between eight and 12 aircraft.





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