

Saab Underwater Systems constantly develops, adopts and improves new technology to meet changing customer needs, as Lars Tossman reveals



Technology for a changing world

Saab Underwater Systems is a business unit within the Saab Group specialising in underwater systems. The company focuses on the development and production of underwater systems that gather and process data, detect and neutralise mines and destroy naval targets on or under the surface. The trademark of its products is the inherent performance in shallow and extreme shallow water. This is a knowledge that has been built up over a long period of close co-operation with its customers.

Saab Underwater Systems has a long and eminent history as a supplier of highly sophisticated underwater systems for both the Royal Swedish Navy and the export market. The company is evolving towards becoming a provider of services with emphasis placed on further developing its unique key competencies. The business is situated in Motala in beautiful natural surroundings on the shores of the second largest lake in Sweden, Lake Vättern, providing an excellent test and experimental range for its products.

Since its beginnings, in 1910, Saab



Underwater Systems has also been developing and manufacturing torpedoes. The company's close co-operation with the Royal Swedish Navy for developing and testing its systems is a contributing factor towards the low development costs and facilitates realistic conditions and environments for product verification and validation.

Saab has recently strengthened its position in the underwater market with the acquisition of Seaeve Holdings Ltd and its subsidiary Seaeve Marine. This acquisition complements Saab Underwater's vehicle product portfolio with several successful applications and brings the company into new markets within the offshore industry.

Seaeve, with approximately 50 employees, is located in Fareham, Hampshire on the south coast of

England. The company develops and manufactures a complete range of electric powered ROV systems. Its range extends from the portable Seaeve Falcon to the medium work class Panther Plus. Seaeve's operations started in 1987 and the company is now the leading supplier of electrical ROVs to the offshore oil and gas industry. During the past few years, Seaeve has further developed its products and now also delivers vehicles for security, salvage and coastal observation tasks.

Lars Tossman, president for Saab Underwater Systems elaborates: "As a result of the acquisition of Seaeve we now have the opportunity for further growth in the offshore oil and gas market. By merging together the different technical abilities the two companies have to offer we are able to provide an improved product range to our customers. We are also now in a better position to target the increasing maritime security market."

He adds: "Due to the decrease in the defense market and the volatile oil and gas industry we now have to offer better solutions to our customers to be able to remain at the forefront of the industry. In



addition to this, the maritime security market has great potential for growth at the moment due to the increasing pressure on harbour protection. We want to be prepared for this market in order to maximise any potential opportunities."

Saab Underwater Systems is one of the world leaders in the area of underwater systems, serving the global market with world-leading products, services and solutions.

Lars comments: "Our key strength is that we are very good at operating in shallow waters. We are able to keep disturbing noises down to a minimum from our vehicles and identify the noises we are actually looking for. As the company was founded over 100 years ago we have developed our knowledge and experience in this field and are now one of the leading players on the market."

He continues: "We work very

closely with our main customers in Sweden – the Swedish Navy – and together we have invested and developed new products for the shallow water environment. In addition to this, we continually have close contact with our clients to ensure we are meeting their needs. We spend a lot of time holding meetings with our customers, which helps us to determine areas we can improve."

Through close co-operation with its customers, Saab remains at the forefront of product innovation within the global market place. The company is currently investing heavily in the development of a new autonomous product range. Lars explains: "The ROVs we operate today are powered through a cable, which controls the vehicle and its movements. The market is now demanding autonomous vehicles that can operate without any connections."

He continues: "We are developing a completely autonomous ROV, which can either be connected to a cable or be operated independently. This is currently being introduced to the market and is proving to be very successful."

"In addition to this, we have also invested in a submarine ROV. This is a small ROV, which can be fitted in the torpedo tube of a submarine. As a result of this, the submarine carries the ROV on all its operations, which provides many benefits. If the submarine gets damaged in any way then the ROV can help to fix it and it can also be used to guide the submarine through dangerous mine fields."

Lars adds: "The last product we are introducing onto the market is an AUV, which is torpedo-shaped. This vehicle will be used for operations where the AUV is required onsite for a number of days. Being completely autonomous, the long endurance vehicle can operate independently away from its base."

To help increase awareness of its product range, Saab is continually promoting the company, as Lars explains: "We have recently held a demonstration in Australia where we showcased the new products we have been developing. This was over a two-week period where we promoted the benefits our autonomous range can provide for our customers. This was a great success for the company."

Saab Underwater's vision for the next few years is to continue growing by increasing its product range and focusing on the maritime security market. Lars concludes: "We have a very long tradition undertaking shallow water operations and have gained a significant amount of knowledge within the company. My personal mission is to get every employee within the organisation involved with its future and encourage them to contribute their own ideas towards the overall goals of the company." ■



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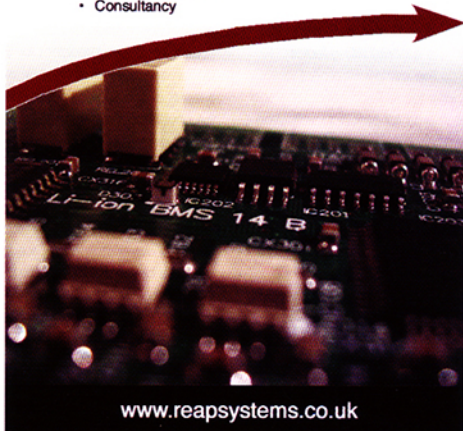
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