Gavia AUVs vehicles successfully utilized by Portuguese Navy

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Two Gavia systems delivered to NATO / NAMSA in January 2010 have already proved their worth on behalf of the Portuguese Navy, both for Mine Countermeasures (MCM) purposes and for Search and Rescue Missions.

The vehicles primary use will be MCM applications by the Portuguese Navy, but due to the modular nature of the Gavia systems, the vehicles can readily be re-configured by the addition of Gavia modules to conduct various types of missions, ranging from hydrographic survey to Anti Submarine Warfare training. The Portuguese Navy and Hafmynd Ehf of Iceland are also cooperating to better tweak the capabilities of the Gavia AUV for MCM applications and for specific Portuguese Navy missions and operating environments.

Mine Counter Measures in the Mediterranean

In April 2010, during an international Mine Hunting Exercise (MINEX) and a counter terrorist training exercise, the Portuguese Navy Gavia vehicles ran around 45 hours of mission in 3 different operating areas. The week long project was collaboration between MCM Assets from Spain, Portugal and the NATO Standing MCM Group 2, with ships from Spain, Germany, Italy, Greece Turkey and Lithuania. The Gavia vehicles performed successfully with the vehicles locating a high percentage of the Mine Like Objects, resulting in fewer dives for the divers and by operating only by utilizing vessels of opportunity thus reducing the need for specialized Mine Warfare dedicated vessels.

Lieutenant Commander Carlos Afonso of the Portuguese Navy (Head of Mine Warfare Office, PO Naval Tactical Center) is satisfied with the Gavia vehicles and the results they have delivered so far: “The *Portuguese Navy has recently incorporated GAVIA Systems for a wide range of applications. Our GAVIA systems are currently exclusive in the international MCM community, bringing us some challenges but most of all giving a new concept of operations due to its modularity characteristic, which allows a set of different configurations, an enlargement of mission time and an almost continuous operation cycle. After its first employment, in an international MCM exercise, the AUV overall performance permitted us to acquire high quality sonar data and, after end, to execute Shallow and Very Shallow MCM Ops with very encouraging results.*”

Search and Rescue Mission in the Atlantic Ocean

When the recreational vessel “Super Eagle II” sank about 13 nautical miles northwest of Aveiro, Portugal on June 20th 2010, the Navy deployed its Gavia AUVs in addition to several vessels equipped with Side Scan Sonars, a ROV and an Air Force aircraft.

It was ultimately the Gavia AUVs that located and identified the vessel at about 50meters depth, which was essential to redirect thw search of the four missing persons lost in the boat accident. One person was rescued by a fishing boat shortly after the accident.

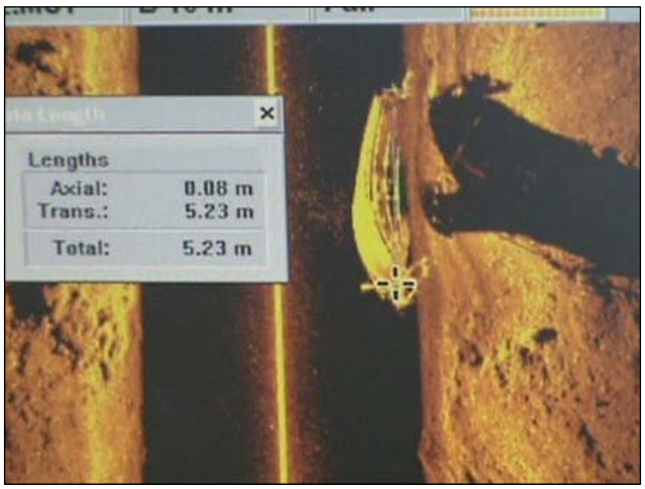

Image taken by the Gavia AUV at 50 meters depth,10m sonar range (courtesy of PO NAVY)

The sunken vessel “Super Eagle II” towed away by a fishing boat. (Image via Renascenca www.rr.pt)

Related links:
Deployment of Gavia from Navy vessel: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8JBIdDWd5WU
Portuguese news story: http://www.rr.pt/informacao_detalhe.aspx?fid=92&did=109590
Harbor news report: http://www.marinha.pt/PT/noticiaseagenda/noticias/Pages/SuperAguiaII.aspx
SEACON – Rapid Environmental Picture 2010 (REP10)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XTaSNlMXesQ&feature=player_embeddedcture