

# How a Training Institute Gets Byâ€



Students all over the world are finding it difficult to get the training that they need in the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. In this article, we see how a hydrographic training institute in the Netherlands is doing the best that it can to train our future surveyors, with a little help from the hydrographic industry.

Because of the restrictions imposed by the Dutch government during the early

stages of the coronavirus pandemic, the students on the MIWB Cat. A course in the Netherlands still had to perform their final year 'Oosterom' Comprehensive Field Training Project. Once the regulations relaxed for schools, they had the opportunity to carry out the yearly wreck survey. After much planning (smaller groups were required due to Covid-19 regulations), we could finally start to iron out some of the wrinkles that the pandemic had left behind.

Why am I mentioning this? Because the students performed this project fully independently, using a 'bare' vessel of opportunity lent to us by the Nautical College in Amsterdam, as our own survey vessel had to be decommissioned. The equipment this

year was supplied at less than cost price by Kongsberg Netherlands ([EM2040](#)) and Navigation Solutions ([R2Sonic 2024](#)). Without this, we would still be using our slightly out-of-date Reson 8125 multibeam, which were donated by [Rijkswaterstaat](#), [Van Oord](#) and [Navigation Solutions](#). The sound velocity profiles were taken with an AML SVP on perpetual loan from [Seabed BV](#).

For positioning, the students could use either a Fugro-donated G4 PPP system or one of the Trimble SPS851/852 receivers donated by [Geometius](#) and Rijkswaterstaat, with RTK corrections supplied for free by 06-GPS or from the school's Trimble base station. Motion correction was done with either the iXBlue or Royal Netherlands Navy-donated Octans III. For calibrations and the ship's reference frame, the students had the use of total stations and levelling instruments donated by [Boskalis](#) and [Starmountain](#). For software, they had the option to use our academic (free!) licenses from either [QINSy](#), [PDS2000](#) or [EIVA Navipac](#) for data collection, and the same or [Beamworx Autoclean](#) for processing.



Survey set-up on-board MV Gyrinus.

To get back to the main story, my point is that all of these instruments and software are sponsored in one way or another. This was recently a subject of discussion with our students because, although they have grown very used to all of these wonderful instruments, they managed to lose our digital SSS controller during the last survey. That meant that, this year, they had to use our 'old' [Edgetech](#) SSS fish with the EG&G paper SSS recorder. These were part of a much earlier donation by [Fugro](#) and had been kept in storage for at least the last five years while we used the more modern system. But we had kept them for a 'rainy day', so at least they had a backup. They even had to use both of them, as our first recorder broke down midway through the survey. Luckily, the second one kept working, although it required 'delicate handling' and a good bang every now and then.

This shows just how much equipment we need to get a single wreck survey done. It also tells the struggles of keeping hydrographic training alive. I believe that this applies to all hydrographic institutes around the world, and especially those outside the navy realm. It is very hard to attract enough students; for our four-year MIWB Cat. A course in the Netherlands, we have on average 20-25 students per year, and it is about the same on the Skilltrade Cat. B course. This makes it hard to convince the board of directors to invest in very expensive survey equipment (which is out of date within a couple of years) for such a limited number of students.

In this column, therefore, I want to highlight the gratitude of hydrographic training institutes in general and the [MIWB](#) and [Skilltrade](#) in the Netherlands in particular for all the wonderful support we have received over the years from the entire hydrographic industry. Without all of the donations, free guest lectures and reduced rental prices, we would not have been able to train your surveyors in the way we do.

Words are not enough...



One of the two groups of students who performed the survey in 2020.

