Panther Success in Persian Gulf

Abu Dhabi-based CCC (Underwater Engineering) reports significant savings in operational costs since deploying its new Saab Seaeye Panther XT Plus ROV in the shallow waters of the upper Persian Gulf. The company quotes benefits including moving a 14 ton system rather than one weighing 60 tons, having a faster 12-hour set-up rather than taking four days, and providing 150kVA of power generation instead of 500 kVA. In addition, spares and repairs are also cheaper.

CCC’s ROV Manager, Tavis Letherby, said that the Panther XT Plus’ ten-thruster power easily overcomes the four-knot currents and having two Schilling manipulators to hand means that 90% of the tasks normally undertaken by CCC’s 150HP hydraulic work-class ROVs are now possible with the Panther, bringing major savings in costs and logistics.

The company can use smaller ships in support of a smaller system which he sees as a big advantage in the upper Gulf. Big vessels are not as viable in the shallow waters of the region as in other parts of the world. Its hyper-saline waters also make the electric vehicles better suited to the Gulf when compared with an hydraulic ROV that can have problems keeping oil cool.

The ROV can hold station in strong cross currents whilst working at complex or robust tasks. Letherby said that they get a vehicle that has 50% more power than any other ROV of its type, can swim 30% faster – and has a manipulator package with the dexterity of a human arm, yet the muscle power of an hydraulic work ROV.

He quotes one client saving 10 hours of barge time and other costs in their pipe laying operations by using the Panther XT Plus, rather than an hydraulic work ROV to release a Head of Pipe Anchorage made fast to a platform leg. Typically a hydraulic work vehicle would be launched to cut through and sacrifice a 75mm wire pendant. The cost-saving alternative was to secure the anchorage with disposable six-inch rope that could be cut with a knife – a task normally needing a diver’s dexterity (and lengthy dive time whilst working in 60 metres) but made possible with the humanoid deftness of the Panther’s powerful manipulator that can slice through the rope in a moment.

CCC’s 1,000 metre-rated Panther XT Plus comes with an electronics pod for additional sensors, four cameras including a Kongsberg compact zoom model, and a Tritech Super SeaKing sonar, together with the Schilling manipulators and a tether management system.

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