

Sonardyneâ€™s Solstice MCM Sonar Now MINTACS-compatible for Royal Australian Navy



Marine technology company Sonardyne has announced that its Solstice multi-aperture sonar has been integrated into mine warfare command software used by the Royal Australian Navy (RAN).

Through a collaboration with Australian defence software engineering company

Solutions from Silicon (SfS), data collected by Solstice during mine counter measure (MCM) missions can now be imported, processed and displayed in the most recent release of the [MINTACS](#) (Mine Warfare Tactical Command Software), which is in service with the RAN.

Sonardyne's Solstice is widely considered a force multiplier for MCM operations, enabling substantially higher area coverage rates (ACR) using low-cost, low-logistics autonomous underwater vehicles (AUVs). It provides a 200m-wide swath with an unrivalled 0.15° along-track resolution and consumes just 18Watts, maximizing vehicle endurance.

Solstice is now fitted, as standard, to General Dynamics Mission Systems' Bluefin-9 and Bluefin-12 unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs). Seven Bluefin-9 and Bluefin-12s will join the RAN's UUV fleet this year under its [SEA 1778 programme](#). They will be based at HMAS Waterhen in Sydney and will search for, classify and identify sea mines.

Marking Mine-like Objects

MINTACS provides the operator with the ability to not only read and display the Solstice data but also to mark mine-like objects (MLOs) of interest and process the images with its powerful onboard automatic target recognition (ATR) capability. MINTACS is in service with many countries around the world, including the national navies of the UK, Australia, Malaysia, United Arab Emirates, New Zealand and Sweden.

"Naval mine warfare is currently experiencing a major generational change that once complete will see unmanned and autonomous systems take on virtually all aspects of a traditional crewed mine hunter, including detection, classification, identification and neutralization," says Russell Norman, technical director at [SfS](#). "With the significantly increased sonar ranges provided by Solstice, compared with traditional side-scan sonar, the goal of achieving the required area coverage rates is one step closer."

Ioseba Tena, global business manager Defence & Robotics at [Sonardyne](#), says: "At Sonardyne, we are really proud to be supporting SfS and their efforts to provide additional capability to the Royal Australian Navy. We're confident that, with Solstice data now within the MINTACS database, the Royal Australian Navy will see tangible gains as part of its ongoing expansion of its deployable mine countermeasures capability in the maritime domain."

□ Australian Mine Warfare Team 16, MCDGRP and DSTG staff operating the Bluefin 9 autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV) from a Mine Countermeasure Support Boat (MCMSB) during a Project Sea 1778 equipment application course at Pittwater, New South Wales. (Image from Commonwealth of Australia, 2020)

