

Lower costs for safer coasts

Given the current global economic climate, coastal defence bodies have their work cut out in striking the right balance between tightening their purse strings while continuing to tackle headline issues such as terrorism and piracy. As a result, **Tampa Yacht Manufacturing** has expanded its cost-effective craft range, tailor-made to customer requirements, as CEO Robert L Stevens explains.

Have there been any recent developments since Tampa Yacht Manufacturing last spoke with *Defence & Security Systems International* in May?

Robert L Stevens: The dual threats of global terrorism and piracy continue to present significant challenges to nations and world commerce. There is a need for strong coastal defences and the ability to enforce the law in open ocean waters. At the same time, the world economy continues to struggle with slow growth, causing national defence budgets to shrink under the need for fiscal restraint.

This creates opportunities for Tampa Yacht Manufacturing (TYM) to leverage its unique ability to supply sophisticated, state-of-the-art patrol craft, offered at a cost-effective price. We've accomplished this by applying high-rate production manufacturing techniques to our custom and semi-custom military craft solutions. This approach continues to enable TYM to win worldwide tenders on a low-cost bidder basis against a strong field of competitors worldwide.

What are the most pertinent coastal defence issues right now?

With budget restrictions we are seeing large navies reallocate resources closer to home. Countries that previously benefitted from the presence of larger nations and multinational navies are now having to rethink their defence solutions. Many countries are now making multitiered plans for their own defence, including significant coastal elements.

We are working with our customers to help develop requirements and offer off-the-shelf solutions, which will allow them to rapidly deploy robust coastal defence solutions, including larger high-speed interceptor craft, medium-size coastal craft, and foam-filled collar-equipped craft (FFC) for smaller port security.

Many regions are becoming increasingly concerned about the possibility of asymmetric swarming threats presented by countries already equipped with large numbers of small craft, so many are considering fielding fleets of their own. TYM can rapidly supply a large number of small craft to accomplish this.

We are also observing the steady increase in unmanned craft for reconnaissance use and direct engagements. We are currently working with several companies to

provide our low-cost, proven craft as unmanned autonomous or semi-autonomous surface vessels (ASV) for both ISR sensor platforms as well as direct acting weapons platforms.

How much emphasis does TYM place on research and development?

TYM is heavily engaged in research and development in a number of areas. We are a leader in the development of new methods for the deployment of ballistic protection in small craft, which are highly effective, easily repaired and replaced at the lowest cost. Our unique 'batt-in-place' (BIP) installation and integration system for ballistic materials permits TYM to offer ballistic protection in craft where it was formerly too expensive, too heavy or too difficult. We continue to develop new methods and employ new hybrid materials into our craft.

Our in-house team of engineers and expert naval architects, Ocean5 Naval Architects, continue to work very closely to develop new hull forms, which provide a smoother ride, with lower acceleration as well as higher speed and efficiency, using multiple and varied powertrains.

“ TYM is heavily engaged in research and development in a number of areas. ”

At our core, we are a composite fabricator, and continually strive to develop new methods to improve quality, reliability and durability while reducing the cost of our boats. These R&D efforts include the use and development of vacuum-assisted close moulding systems, as well as the deployment of new and advanced materials, including nano-enhanced materials, resins and hybrid fibre systems.

How does TYM's approach differ in serving diverse geographical regions?

Each client has unique and special requirements depending on their geographical, geopolitical and internal government structures. We appreciate the opportunity to support our clients and see it as our responsibility to intimately familiarise ourselves with these unique

conditions to ensure our craft are custom-configured to suit their needs.

Using this approach, we are best able to fill the coastal defence requirements of our customers. This approach also ensures that craft supplied for use in coastal tropic waters are suitable for operation in highly saline, high-temperature seawater conditions, use robust cooling systems, and provide active and passive cooling systems to reduce crew fatigue. Offering custom-configured solutions is critical both to the success of our customers' defence and the success of TYM craft.

Aligning our supply system to the customer's procurement methods also forms a key element of our custom-configured solution. Some developing countries are working hard to establish indigenous manufacturing capabilities, and leverage their defence budget to have the greatest impact on supplying capability, as well as domestic economic growth. In these countries, TYM is dedicated to providing significant indigenous offset, or working directly with local suppliers for technology transfer.

How does TYM go about transferring its technology to shipbuilders and agencies in nations where littoral terrorism is prevalent?

We have forged relationships with local shipyards, builders, vendors and governments to help build our craft under licence in-country. We are experts in vessel design and construction, and excited about the opportunity to share our expertise with nations seeking to provide standalone defence capabilities.

As a fabricator of composite craft, we work with indigenous builders at various levels. This includes the supply of major assemblies for the final assembly, composite fabrications and moulds, as well as the total local fabrication with training and technical support.

Again, the key here is supplying total coastal defence solutions that uniquely meet the customer nation's requirements. The transfer of knowledge may be a key element to this total solution. ■

Further information
Tampa Yacht Manufacturing
www.tampa-yacht.com



Intelligent Engineering for Coastal Defense.

Tampa Yacht Manufacturing is a full range of megayacht-quality military and commercial craft from 35 to 80 feet in length.

Tampa Yacht Manufacturing is dedicated to providing every customer with the safest, most technological advanced high performance craft on the water. With high speed performance and maneuverability, compatibility with an array of weaponry and navionics, and the safety of advanced ballistic protection, our boats are purpose-built high-tech tools for protecting the world's coastlines from a broad spectrum of littoral threats.



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