

Royal Netherlands Navy

The Royal Netherlands Navy purchased VideoRay Pro 4 ROV systems in 2012 for use in a variety of port security missions, including mine countermeasures (MCM). The Navy's primary targets are small objects like limpet mines, sea mines, and ammunition. These underwater explosives, though small in size, represent one of the single greatest threats to global security, causing more damage to naval vessels than torpedoes, small boat attacks, or larger missiles. Crude yet still massively effective, these devices are cheap, easy to stockpile, and easily concealed in holds of ships and fishing boats. Waterways around the world are still littered with unexploded mines, many of which are remnants from the First and Second World Wars. VideoRays aboard MCM vessels help clear these explosives from the sea, coastal waters, and harbor entrances, as well as to track down sunken ships or cargo that was swept overboard.

The VideoRay Pro 4 ROV allows the Dutch Navy to inspect potentially dangerous objects while keeping a safe distance between the operator and the object. MCM specialists in the Dutch Navy, also known as minehunters, work in tandem with EOD (explosive ordnance disposal) specialists to defuse the device or "blow it in place" (BIP). Previous location and defusion methods were labor-intensive, time-consuming and incredibly dangerous - often providing little or no evidence of success. Today, the Dutch Navy is one of several naval forces around the world that deploy VideoRay ROVs as a mobile, rapid response tool to help them locate and image the mine without getting too close.

Based on the Pro 4 configuration for advanced port security and military tasks, the Dutch Navy's systems came equipped with custom accessory packages that expanded their VideoRays' capabilities for specific MCM tasks. The hull crawler uses suction to glide effortlessly along curved ship hulls, while the lateral thruster adds another plane of movement for the ROV. BlueView multibeam imaging sonar and LYNN real-time video enhancement help locate underwater explosives in low visibility, while the Trittech positioning system marks the precise location of each mine or target. The manipulator arm can recover, move, or grab objects up to 45 kg (100 lb) without deploying divers to handle them.

The Dutch Navy quickly discovered how capable, versatile, and easy-to-use the VideoRay is, locating two drowning victims within two months of the systems' delivery and proving the ROV as essential equipment in any maritime fleet.

