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TUCF plugging gap in subsea toolbox

Bevis Yeo
Friday, 8 May 2009

PERTH-based TUCF Training & Logistics is testing the waters for interest in Oceanworks International's Hardsuit One Atmospheric Diving System that can operate in water depths of up to 365m.

The suits, which were last available in Australia 13 years ago, are deployed from a launch and recovery similar to that used for remotely operated vehicles and offer about 80% of the dexterity as well as human perception and spatial awareness compared to a ROV.

The Hardsuit is smaller than a Workclass ROV, allowing it to fit into similar areas in and around manifolds and subsea trees as divers.

The suit maintains normal atmospheric pressure for its operator, removing the need for decompression which can be time-consuming and expensive.

"While the suits allow their operator to work at depths similar to that normally reserved for saturation diving, it wasn't designed to replace such operations," TUCF managing director Ian Milliner told *PetroleumNews.net*.

"Rather the Hardsuits are best seen as part of the toolbox for subsea operations in conjunction with saturation diving and workclass ROVs."

He added the suits were very manoeuvrable and, unlike the previous suits, the new HS1200 featured a more powerful thruster system with upgraded electronics.

Company business development manager Dusty Miller added that while the suit's primary role was for inspection, its ability to carry out all types of underwater operations using available tools for cutting, inspection, pulling, tensioning, connecting and disconnecting allowed it to fulfil the secondary role of light construction.

"The suit has been getting a lot of interest at OTC [Offshore Technology Conference] in Houston and a lot of interest in the Gulf of Mexico."

He noted the TUCF was organising a demonstration at its facility in North Fremantle to demonstrate the suits' ability to carry out a 16-inch tie-in.

"We need to show people before they believe it can do the work."

Miller added that if there was enough interest in the suits, the company had two brand-new HS 1200 suits in Vancouver to be deployed to carry out work.

The Hardsuits carry enough oxygen for 6-8 hours of operation along with 42 hours of emergency life support.

It includes a colour video camera capable of zooming, panning and tilting that allows an external observer to monitor or supervise an operation and can mount an optional sonar unit.

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Oceanworks Hardsuit

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