

'9-metre Kirby Naiad 9000 RIB'



A Kirby Marine-built Naiad RIB for tactical response **By MIKE BROWN**

Kirby Marine has built Naiad RIBs of all lengths and in a myriad of customised layouts, but their latest vessel is the closest yet to a military style.

This nine-metre version with foam filled hull is for the WA Police's Tactical Response Group (TRG).

Built to seat ten in two files, it was designed for the maximum safety and comfort within the vessel's operational envelope. This ensures that the vessel can deliver eight fully equipped officers in the best possible condition in a wide range of weather conditions.

One example of the thinking here is the location of the control console. This is well forward, with all seats behind it, where many layouts put the console right aft with all the passengers in front. The Kirby system means the coxswain gets the worst ride, and has more incentive to moderate speed or adjust trim.

The seats themselves are superb, literally the world's best: Ullman from Sweden. Jockey-style suspension seats, they were developed to preserve the backs of occupants of the Swedish Army's fast commando boats. On the Kirby they are mounted on two raised tunnels containing personal lockers under each seat.

The seat's design requires a smaller pitch between seats, meaning that there is a larger open space ahead of the console. This is the mustering and boarding area, and the coxswain and navigator's seats have been placed closer together than the others to ease the passengers' movement forward.

Most Kirby Naiads have a fatigue membrane on the deck. Since standing



under way is not an option on this vessel, the membrane has been deleted in favour of a non-skid deck.

The vessel may operate in Pilbara and Kimberley waters, and shade had to be provided for heavily dressed occupants. The shade system is for use when loitering, and so does not need the ruggedness it would if deployed at 50 knots. A lightweight awning deploys from the Targa arch to supports forward, and can be quickly dropped when the vessel goes operational.

Electronics consist of radar, GPS-plotter and sounder sharing a single display, and VHF, UHF and 27MHz radios.

Considerable thought went into making the vessel as foolproof and failsafe as possible. Steering in a high performance vessel is clearly one of the critical elements, and the Kirby's system could hardly be bettered. The twin 186kW Yamaha four-stroke outboards, locked together by tie bar, have a closed loop hydraulic system with twin Hynautic rams.

The Yamaha outboards deliver a top speed of 51-52 knots, with a likely cruising speed of 30 knots. The 730-litre fuel capacity gives them a range of 250 nautical miles.

An earlier TRG RIB troubled its operators with petrol fumes, and Kirby ensured that the problem did not surface here. The vent from the vapour-fuel separation unit discharges below the tubes, and no fumes find their way aboard at rest or when moving.

A particularly large splash well is built in, well able to cope with the surge on sudden deceleration. Within this transom structure, batteries, oil tanks and filters are kept dry and clear of the working area.

Rapid deployment by road is obviously a priority, and weights allow this without the need for anything unusual in tow vehicles. The vessel alone weighs 2.4 tonnes, with trailing weight 3.4 tonnes.

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'Kirby Naiad 9000 RIB'

SPECIFICATIONS

Type of vessel: Tactical response vessel

Designer: Naiad

Builder: Kirby Marine

Owner: WA Police

Length overall: 9.0 metres

Beam: 3.0 metres

Draught: 0.45 metres

Collar diameter: 0.55 metres

Fuel capacity: 730 litres

Main engines: 2 x 186kW Yamaha
4-stroke outboards

