SA Navy bags southern hemisphere printing first

The South African Navy’s Naval Publication Unit (NPU) is the proud owner of a Heidelberg Speedmaster XL 106-4. By Vanessa Clark

The Heidelberg Speedmaster XL press, launched by Heidelberg at Drupa 2012, is the first of its kind in Africa and the southern hemisphere. It was acquired as part of the Navy’s refurbishment of its printing unit in order to centralise all the SA armed forces’ printing requirements. The Speedmaster handles up to 18 000 sheets per hour and is the ‘pinnacle of Heidelberg technology’ said Steven Wiggill, Heidelberg Cape Town branch manager.

According to the company, the press boosts productivity by 20 to 30 per cent compared to its predecessor. Heidelberg revamped the NPU print shop for the Navy, equipping it with a range of new kit where required. The Heidelberg team, barring the UK-based trainer for XL 106-4, was local and took care of layout design, installation and training. The Navy will staff the print shop with 14 newly qualified in-house printers who have spent the last two to three years completing apprenticeships at commercial printers, said Wiggill. In addition to print work that includes magazines, the NPU is required to print A1 charts for the navy on short notice. ‘It was becoming prohibitively expensive for the navy to continue outsourcing such printing work,’ said Wiggill. Outsourced suppliers simply didn’t have the flexibility to print and deliver the maps and charts within a short turn around at the right pricing.

The rest of the new kit installed in the refurbished unit includes:

• Heidelberg Suprasetter A 105 computer to plate (CtP) unit, which combined with Prinect pre-press manager sends ink profiles to the XL 106-4 more speedily;
• Heidelberg Stahlfolder KH 56, a half-size folder that is used with the
existing Heidelberg MOV press and complements the existing Stahlfolder KH 66, allowing the NPU to process a variety of sheet sizes;

- Heidelberg Stitchmaster ST 100 for saddle-stitching the publications at speeds of up to 9 000 cycles per hour. For thicker publications, requiring perfect binding whether for long or short runs, the NPU has installed a Heidelberg Eurobind 600 hot melt binding unit;

- Finally two new Polar 137 Plus guillotines will handle the workload from both printing presses.

After much research the SA Navy realised that Heidelberg was the only company that could offer a total installation of all components from one supplier, said Wiggill, which contributed to the Navy awarding them the tender. Thanks to this extensive refurbishment, the Navy is now set to take over the printing requirements of the entire South African National Defence Force. The decision once again reaffirmed Heidelberg South Africa and the SA Navy close relationship which has spanned over 40 years.

Wiggill praised the co-operation with the navy and especially Warrant Officer

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Graham Billimore, who project managed the installation from start to finish on behalf of the navy. The installation was completed within deadline, said Wiggill. It was a great team effort and a huge thank you goes out to all the Heidelberg staff that contributed to an excellent result to a keystone project which in turn allowed Heidelberg to fly the flag high.

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**About the Heidelberg Speedmaster XL106-4**

- Upgrades the previous Speedmaster XL 105.

- Intended for print shops with a wide range of materials, large print volumes, or frequent job changes.

- Operating speed of up to 18 000 sheets per hour in both straight and the optional perfecting modes.

- Processes a wide range of substrates up to 1.0 mm (0.039 in) stock thickness (in perfecting mode, up to 0.8 mm/0.031 in stock thickness).

- Larger sheet format (75 x 106 cm).

- Twelve inkjet heads – employing the continuous inkjet method – can be integrated into the coating unit.

- Capable of up to million sheets a year, make-readies of 90 000 and 100 000 printing plates a year.

- Integration of an inkjet marking device in conjunction with Prinect Inspection Control making it possible to check and flag waste on sheets on the run using a PDF

- Very short make-ready times

- Prinect Inpress Control reduces the paper waste during each job and facilitates ok sheets up to 50 seconds.

- Offers the broadest range of configurations in the 70 x 100 cm (27.56 x 39.37 in) format. It is available from two to 19 units, with or without perfecting, and is designed to process stocks from inmold foils to heavy kraft board.


- Customers can opt for a carbon neutral certification. A heat recovery system enabling exhaust from the DryStar Combination dryers to be reused for the drying process thus reducing energy requirements.