Indonesia Will Patrol Vast Maritime Domain with New Tank Boat



The X-18 Tank Boat, which will soon undergo builder's trials and acceptance testing for the Indonesian Ministry of Defense. *PT PINDAD*

It's a tank! It's a boat! It's "Tank Boat!"

The Indonesian Ministry of Defense has ordered a prototype of a new kind of maritime weapons system, the X18 "Tank Boat," from a consortium composed of Indonesian companies and a European partner.

Patrolling and protecting the Indonesia's maritime domain is a challenge. Indonesia is a large and populous country, but is spread out among 17,000 islands – many of them sparsely settled or uninhabited – stretching more than 3,100 miles from West Papua in the east and Aceh in the west. Many critical sea lanes pass through Indonesian waters.

The X-18 prototype has been ordered for the Indonesian Army under what is being called the Antanesa program, but more commonly referred to as Tank Boat. The consortium that built it includes the Indonesian defense and industrial equipment manufacturer PT Pindad, PT Lundin's North Sea Boats, PT Len Industri, and engineering and electronics firm PT Hariff, as well as the European arms manufacturer maker John Cockerill, which makes turrets for light and medium-weight armored vehicles.

The X18 Tank Boat is a catamaran design for coastal, riverine and inshore operations. Officials believe the well-armed X-18 and can meet a number of maritime patrol, search and rescue, expeditionary and special operations missions with its ability

operate in shallow water and land on a beach to offload or pick up troops. Tank Boat has a range of about 600 nautical miles, which allows it to move between Indonesia's many coastal military bases.

The design isn't new – North Sea Boats has been working on it for 10 years. The Initial concept of Tank Boat features a 105mm gun, but the current prototype will be equipped with a remotely operated Cockerill Protected Weapon Station (CPWS) turret with a 30mm automatic cannon.

North Sea Boats has experience making composite vessels such as catamarans and landing craft, including an all-composite trimaran fast attack boat built for the Indonesian navy that was destroyed by fire in 2012 before it was commissioned. The company then embarked on construction of a second trimaran that was subsequently halted.

An APC 60 variant will carry up to 60 soldiers and will be armed with a CPWS equipped with a 25- or 30-mm. gun and an EO/IR sensor.

The X-18 is diesel powered and employs waterjets. It has a crew of crew of four or five and will embark a RHIB for boardings or SEAL insertion, and features multi-mission deck for unmanned aircraft, containerized cargo or modular weapons. Designed with a shallow draft, X-18 can operate in swamps, coastal and riverine environments as well in blue water, and can land on a beach to discharge personnel and supplies onto dry land.

The composite catamaran was launched last month at the North Sea Boats facility in Banyuwangi on the eastern tip of Java. Launched on April 28, the first X-18 will undergo builder's trials and acceptance testing, as well as weapons firing evaluations.