Navy Awards Orca XLUUV Contract to Boeing

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy has selected Boeing to build the Orca extra-large unmanned underwater vehicle (XLUUV).

With a $43 million contract modification, the Naval Sea Systems Command ordered four Orcas and associated support elements, a Feb. 13 Defense Department contract announcement said.

The Orca – named for the similar-size marine mammal – is the largest unmanned underwater vehicle currently planned for the Navy's operational use. It will not be submarine-launched but autonomously launched from the shore and independently deployed.

The open-architecture, reconfigurable Orca XLUUV "will be modular in construction with the core vehicle providing guidance and control, navigation, autonomy, situational awareness, core communications, power distribution, energy and power, propulsion and maneuvering, and mission sensors," the announcement said. "The Orca XLUUV will have well-defined interfaces for the potential of implementing cost-effective upgrades in future increments to leverage advances in technology and respond to threat changes."

The XLUUV will be equipped with a modular payload bay with interfaces for future payloads.

The Boeing design is based on the 51-foot-long Echo Voyager, a large autonomous UUV developed by the company as a capabilities demonstrator.

The Orca program is managed by the Program Executive Office – Unmanned and Small Combatants.