New SEAL Dry Combat Submersible Set for Operational Test in Late 2021



A prototype Dry Combat Submersible. *U.S. NAVY*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) will be putting the new Dry Combat Submersible (DCS) Block 1 through testing in preparation for delivery this fall, a senior SOCOM official said, and is laying the groundwork for a DCS-Next version.

James Smith, acquisition executive for SOCOM, speaking with reporters May 17 in a roundtable of the National Defense Industrial Association's Special Operations Industry Conference, said the first submersible, DCS1, is finishing up Developmental Test and will begin Operational Test this summer.

The 30-ton DCS provides a fully enclosed environment to transport SEAL teams to and from objectives without being exposed to cold and fatigue. The submersible is designed to be operated by a crew of two and to carry eight SEALs. The hull features two topside hatches as well as a lockout chamber. The DCS Block 1 is to operate from surface ships only and not from submarines. DCS1 was delivered in 2019 to begin sea trials.

In July 2016, Lockheed Martin was awarded a $166 million contract to build up to three lithium battery-powered DCSs over five years. The first vessel, DCS1, was delivered in 2019 to begin sea trials.

Smith also said SOCOM is working on "pre-program activities" for DCS-Next, which is planned as a DCS that will be able to operate from submarines, is scheduled for program start in fiscal 2024, but that SOCOM is "working right now to pull that

left into ’23.”

Smith also noted that the prototype approach – three prototypes (one leased and two procured) – for DCS Block I would be too expensive for DCS Block II, but that using digital design and engineering would make the program affordable.