

Pliant Energy Systems Awarded \$4.4M Contract from US Office of Naval Research

\$4.4M contract (with Option) to develop an autonomous, amphibious vehicle with Al enhancements and swarming capability

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, USA, August 23, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- <u>Pliant</u> <u>Energy Systems</u> has won a \$4.4M award (with Option) from the US Office of Naval Research (ONR) to mature their unique marine robotics platform. Benjamin Pietro Filardo, Pliant's Founder and CEO states the following:



Previous proof-of-concept prototype developed by Pliant Energy Systems

"After several years of basic and applied research into the under-explored phenomena that make our technology possible, this award will fund development of our first product, C-Ray[™]. The remarkable versatility and agility of Pliant's previously-demonstrate <u>Velox</u> prototype will be surpassed. Autonomous capabilities will be added, including multi-vehicle swarming during the Option phase."

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We propose the first triumph of Al in autonomous robots will be in environments where people cannot easily go, performing tasks people cannot easily do." *Pietro Filardo, Founder and CEO* Targeted early adopters include the US Navy, Marine Corps, Special Operations, Coast Guard, and Army Corps of Engineers. The unique ability of Pliant's platform to operate in the surf zone will give US forces their first robust cyber presence in a theater critical to amphibious landings and reconnaissance. The platform's ability to transition between land and water has multiple civilian applications in shallow waters and coastal environments such as salt marshes, mud flats and seagrass beds. Its

gently undulating fins cause minimal environmental

disturbance compared to spinning propeller blades and are resistant to entanglement in aquatic plants or debris.

"Amphibious capability comes from the highly effective use of undulating fins instead of propellers," notes Mr. Filardo. "This has distinguished us and provided an opening into an otherwise crowded sector. However, our propulsion system has other characteristics that are advantageous to a range of subsea and surface applications. Low noise, high maneuverability, a low-energy wake, and, most significantly, high energy efficiency. With successful conclusion of the ONR-funded C-Ray[™] program, we intend to implement Pliant's core technology into additional vehicles and product lines."

Mr. Filardo sees the program's emphasis on autonomy as a step towards developing highly capable, mass-produced autonomous marine robots. "People can drive cars, pick fruit and stack boxes, but they cannot gather shellfish or <u>polymetallic nodules</u> from the ocean floor," Mr. Filardo notes. "We propose the first triumph of AI in autonomous robots will be in environments where people cannot easily go, performing tasks people cannot easily do."

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