



DEPARTURE

by Thayer Syme

Ascending flat spins?

IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT, a submarine is a true flying machine, not a boat. Like an airplane or blimp, a submarine can explore its environment in 3 dimensions, flying the same way “flightless” penguins soar through the ocean.

Megatech’s new Ocean Explorer-1 is a technology-packed, micro-RC electric submarine that is designed for simple care-free operation.

The clever engineers at Megatech have come up with elegant solutions to buoyancy, maneuverability and waterproofing challenges. The depth limit is a full 6 feet—although we know of successful tests down to at least 10 feet. You won’t have any problems in any home aquarium!

With a length of only 3¾ inches, the Ocean Explorer-1 is a very small vessel, and unlikely to be operated far away. However, should you “fly” out of range at your local Olympic-size swimming pool, the craft will rise safely to the surface.

Charging is accomplished via sealed contacts accessed within the removable conning tower. A matching connector attached to the wall charger recharges the internal batteries. The tower is itself an electrical jumper that switches on the sub. The Hull is permanently sealed.

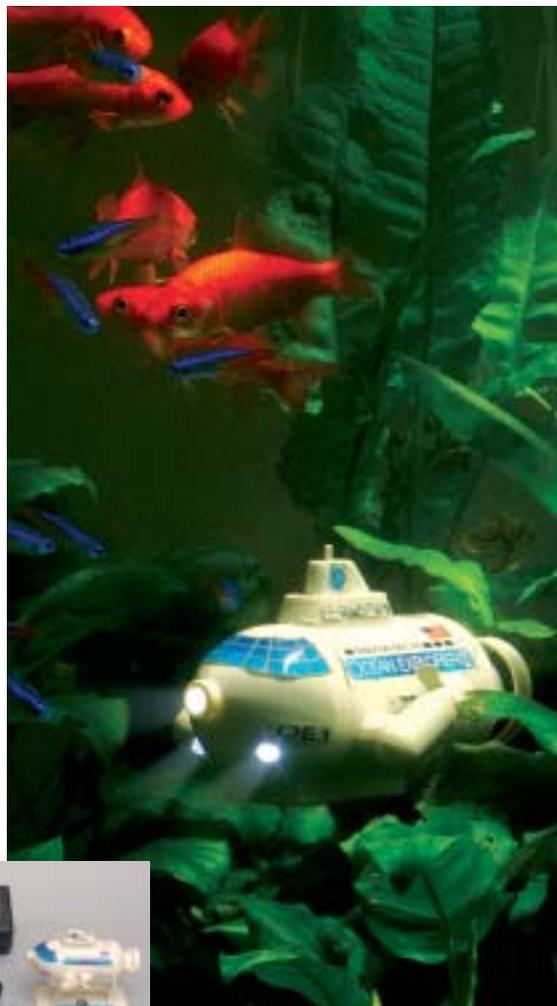
MISSION REPORT

I quickly unpacked my Ocean Explorer-1 from its carrying case and set it up on the display stand.

After a two-hour charge, and with 8 new AA alkaline cells in the transmitter, the ship was ready to explore the planted aquarium in our living room. The Ocean Explorer-1 accommodates normal battery temperature fluctuations with an internal “vacuum bladder” that maintains a constant cabin pressure.

I put the conning tower switch on the

Ocean Explorer-1, and the 3 ultra bright searchlights in the nose came to life. Flashing red and green navigation lights at the back of the sub offer further scale realism. I advanced the throttle and the submarine slowly submerged as it started forward. The full throttle decent rate allowed me to reach the bottom of our tank quite quickly. Turning left and right was easy to control with differential power between the two motors.



MANUFACTURER: Megatech
PRODUCT NAME: Ocean Explorer-1
HULL LENGTH: 3.75 inch
HEIGHT: 2 inch
ENGINE: Twin MegaMicro
REQUIRES: 8 “AA” alkaline for the transmitter
PRICE: estimated street price \$80 to \$90.
LINKS: www.megatech.com; (201) 662-8500

Partial throttle allows you to maintain a desired depth. Running the motors in reverse will cause the Ocean Explorer-1 to rise as it backs up. A full turn command while in reverse will cause a neat spinning climb.

The Ocean Explorer-1 is rated for 15 minutes of fun on a single charge, although my missions have lasted quite

a bit longer. Once at depth, I tend to use blips of power to explore the tank. The Ocean Explorer can sit at idle on the surface for hours and still retain plenty of charge. Interestingly, our Neon Tetras and Goldfish seem completely at ease with the Ocean Explorer-1. They only dart away if accidentally nudged. The Ocean Explorer-1 is great fun late at night in a darkened room, when the confines of our 30 gallon aquarium are less apparent, and the search lights illuminate the fish and foliage.

Salt water operation is possible, but extra attention must be paid to cleaning the electrical contacts after each mission. If you want to hover and dive in your fish tank or swimming pool, consider flying the Ocean Explorer-1! ☺