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Virginia Class SSNs

“New Hampshire’s early delivery and commissioning is an example of how the Submarine Force and our ship building partners are working to provide the Navy with the platforms needed to ensure undersea superiority for decades to come.”

- Vice Adm. John J. Donnelly, Commander, Submarine Force

The Virginia-class submarine is the first submarine designed to operate in today’s undersea environment to dominate both the littorals and the deep oceans. New Hampshire (SSN 778) is the first Virginia-class submarine to take substantial advantage of on-going cost-reduction initiatives. It was delivered to the Navy eight months early and will be commissioned on Oct. 25 at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine.

Delivering Capability to the Fleet

- The Virginia-class submarine is multi-mission capable with mission areas that directly support five of the six Maritime Strategy core capabilities. Their mission areas include: anti-submarine warfare; anti-surface warfare; strike; special operations; intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; irregular warfare; strike group support; and mine warfare.
- Examples of the Virginia-class program’s ability to delivery capability to the fleet, both USS Virginia (SSN 774) and USS Hawaii (SSN 776) conducted operational deployments prior to their post-shakedown availabilities. Ships do not typically deploy until after this availability, a ship’s last maintenance and modernization period conducted under its new-construction warranty.
- New Hampshire is the first of the Virginia class submarines to take full advantage of monetary incentives offered to shipbuilders to improve their facilities and construction practices. These incentives proved to be a key driver in the New Hampshire’s early delivery.

Looking to the Future

- Five more Virginia-class submarines are under construction, and each is expected to be delivered between eight and 12 months early. The sixth ship of the class, New Mexico (SSN 779), will be christened on Dec. 13 at Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding’s Newport News site.
- The Navy is negotiating a five-year, eight-ship Virginia-class contract that will build one ship per year in 2009 and 2010 before transitioning to two ships per year in 2011, 2012 and 2013. Scheduled to be awarded in December 2008, this will be the third Virginia class contract.
- In 2005, the CNO stated that the Navy would buy two Virginia-class submarines in Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 if the per-unit cost came down from \$2.4 billion per hull to \$2 billion as measured in FY05 dollars. That cost-reduction goal remains in place today. Considering inflation, the actual goal per submarine in FY12 is \$2.59 billion. The program is on track to meet this goal.

Key Messages

- Virginia-class submarine mission areas directly support the core capabilities of the Maritime Strategy.
- The Virginia class is the first submarine to dominate both the littorals and deep oceans.
- New Hampshire is the first Virginia-class submarine to take substantial advantage of on-going cost-reduction initiatives.
- Production of Virginia-class SSNs is on track to meet CNO’s cost reduction goals.

Facts & Figures

- New Hampshire is the fourth ship of the U.S. Navy to be named for the state of New Hampshire
- New Hampshire is the fifth ship of the Virginia class.
- With USS North Carolina’s (SSN 777) commissioning earlier this year, 2008 marks the first time in 12 years that two submarines of the same class have been commissioned in the same year.