

# Huntington Ingalls Starts Construction on Columbia-Class Subs



A plasma-burning machine cuts the steel plate at the Newport News Shipbuilding division of Huntington Ingalls Industries in Newport News, Virginia. Huntington Ingalls Industries.

Huntington

Ingalls Industries hosted a ceremonial first-cut-of-steel event today at its

Newport News Shipbuilding division to mark the start of advance construction

for the *Columbia*-class submarine program, the company announced in a press release. The event also marked the first class of

submarines that will be built using fully digital blueprints.

"Today is a

historic day," said Jason Ward, Newport News' vice president for *Columbia*-class construction. "It has been a half century since Newport News Shipbuilding has constructed a ballistic submarine. Today,

we celebrate the decade-plus effort spent working with Electric Boat on the

design of this new class of submarine as we formally transition from design to

material procurement and now to construction execution."

The *Columbia*-class boats will replace the fleet of *Ohio*-class nuclear ballistic submarines. Newport News is

starting its work three weeks ahead of schedule to support its advance

construction efforts, according to the release.

"The first cut

of steel is a major construction milestone that signifies our shipyard and submarine industrial base are ready to move forward with production," Ward said. "We have worked to engage the submarine industrial base and leveraged lessons learned from the successful *Virginia*-class program to building the *Columbia*-class submarines in the most efficient and affordable manner to provide the best value to the Navy."

#### Ceremony

participants included Newport News Shipbuilding President Jennifer Boykin; Rear Adm. Scott Pappano, *Columbia's* program executive officer; Capt. Jon Rucker, *Columbia's* program manager; Will Lennon, vice president of the *Columbia*-class submarine program for General Dynamics Electric Boat; and shipbuilders.

#### Construction

of the 12-boat *Columbia* class will take place in Virginia, Rhode Island and Connecticut, with Electric Boat assembling and delivering all of the submarines. The lead boat is scheduled to be delivered to the Navy in 2027.