Keel laid on UK’s new Dreadnought submarine



From BAE Systems, March 20, 2025

The keel of the first of the UK’s new Dreadnought submarines, the most powerful and technically advanced boats ever designed for the Royal Navy, has been laid at BAE Systems’ Barrow-in-Furness shipyard.

HMS Dreadnought is the first of four Dreadnought Class ballistic missile submarines, which BAE Systems is designing and building in Cumbria, and will succeed the Vanguard Class of submarines.

The ceremonial event, attended by UK Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer, and Secretary of State for Defence, John Healey, marked a significant milestone in the program to maintain the UK’s Continuous at Sea Deterrent (CASD) and protect national security.

The Dreadnought Class will begin to enter service in the early

2030s. CASD will be maintained throughout the transition from Vanguard to Dreadnought Class.

Steve Timms, Managing Director of BAE Systems' Submarines business, said: "Laying the keel for the first of class, HMS Dreadnought, is an incredibly proud moment for everyone across the Company, Defence Nuclear Enterprise and Royal Navy. It comes as the boat's last major unit prepares to make its way into the Devonshire Dock Hall for final integration, demonstrating the progress made across the program to date.

"Our collective role in maintaining Continuous at Sea Deterrence is our most critical responsibility. It's a truly national endeavour vital to safeguarding our way of life, as well as making a significant contribution to local and national prosperity. I'm proud that thousands of our highly-skilled people are at the heart of today's achievement."

Prime Minister, Keir Starmer said: "It's an honor to be in Barrow to lay the keel for the next generation of nuclear-armed submarines. These boats will protect our people and Allies from the most extreme threats to our national security and way of life for future generations.

"Investing in the British defense industry, underpinned by companies like BAE Systems, is at the heart of my government's commitment to national and economic security as part of our Plan for Change. This investment is supporting good, secure jobs and putting money in the pockets of working people.

"The people of Barrow, and the submarines manufactured here, have been an integral part of our deterrent capability for decades. We will continue to foster that innovation and industrial excellence to protect the UK for the decades to come."

Admiral Sir Ben Key, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff,

said: “Since April 1969, Royal Navy submariners have been proud to deliver the Continuous at Sea Deterrent, maintaining at least one nuclear-armed ballistic missile submarine on patrol, ready to respond to the most extreme threats to the UK.

“Whilst the Vanguard Class of submarines continues to deliver CASD today, the Royal Navy is greatly looking forward to operating highly sophisticated and advanced Dreadnought Class submarines. This keel laying ceremony is considered the ‘birth’ of a vessel and I congratulate all those involved across the Alliance for reaching this important milestone in the life of HMS Dreadnought and look forward to bringing this exciting and highly capable submarine into service.”

Dreadnought submarines will be the largest ever operated by the Royal Navy at 153.6 metres long – approximately the length of three Olympic swimming pools.

Technological advances, changing threats and new methods of design and production mean the new boats will represent a significant step change compared to their predecessors. It is one of the largest and most complex engineering projects in the world.

The Dreadnought Alliance, a partnership between BAE Systems, Rolls-Royce and the Ministry of Defence’s Submarine Delivery Agency, manages delivery of the UK’s next nuclear deterrent platform.

As part of the Government’s Nuclear Skills Plan initiative, the Submarines workforce, centred in Barrow, has grown by more than 3,000 since 2023 to 14,700. That growth is set to

continue as both the Dreadnought and SSN-AUKUS programs develop.

The overall Dreadnought programme is expected to support in the region of 30,000 jobs across the UK over the life of the programme.

The Barrow shipyard has undergone more than £1 billion of redevelopment to drive efficiencies and boost capacity to accommodate the build of Dreadnought and ensure the historic shipyard can continue delivering world-class submarines to the Royal Navy for generations to come.

BAE Systems estimates that it will spend in the region of £7.5 billion with 1,500 suppliers in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, ensuring the economic impact of the programme is felt right across the UK.