

Navy Ship Commissionings on Track Despite Pandemic, But Ceremonies Are Delayed



Sonar Technician (Submarine) 1st Class Ryun Lewis (right) demonstrates line-handling procedures to U.S. Naval Sea Cadets during a tour of the Virginia-class attack submarine USS Delaware March 7. The Delaware is moored pier side at Naval Station Norfolk and will be commissioned administratively due to COVID-19 restrictions. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Cameron Stoner

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy plans to put two Virginia-class attack submarines in commission in April despite the COVID-19 pandemic, but the ceremonies marking the events will be delayed.

“Due to public health safety and restrictions on large public events, the commissioning ceremonies for the future USS Delaware and future USS Vermont were canceled for April 4 and 18, respectively,” Bill Couch, a spokesperson for Naval Sea Systems Command, said in a March 24 e-mail to *Seapower*.

“The commissioning of both ships will take place administratively, and the ships will begin normal operations with the fleet.”

The Delaware is the eighth and last Block III Virginia-class SSN. The Vermont is the first of 10 Block IV Virginia-class subs. The two submarines were built jointly by General Dynamics’ Electric Boat and Huntington Ingalls’ Newport News Shipbuilding.

“We greatly value the support of all those who were planning to attend, and we will look for a future opportunity to commemorate these special events with the sponsors, crews and

commissioning committees," Couch said.