

PNSY Returns North Dakota to the Fleet

USS North Dakota (SSN 784) successfully completed its Extended Drydocking Selected Restricted Availability at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Aug. 29, returning the battle-ready asset to the fleet ahead of the rebaselined schedule.

The project, which marked PNSY's first Chief of Naval Operations availability on a submarine from the third production block of the Virginia-class (Block III), successfully integrated cutting-edge maritime technologies. The North Dakota project team and ship's crew successfully navigated several first-time technical alterations and executed the testing program, including its critical testing phase, at a historically rapid pace.

"Executing this complex work package on our first Block III submarine was a demanding task, but this team met every challenge head-on with tenacity and selflessness," said Capt. Jesse Nice, shipyard commander. "Their cohesion, expertise, and indomitable will blazed the trail for future Virginia-class success stories and returned a fully modernized North Dakota back to the fleet, ready for the fight."

This commitment ensured that the complex technical upgrades were completed to the highest standard, preparing the vessel for the demands of modern deployment.

"The state-of-the-art technological capabilities integrated during this availability translate directly into immediate operational capability and credible combat power, strengthening the readiness and resilience of the submarine force and helping our Navy maintain its global edge," said Capt. Mike Poplawski, commodore, Submarine Squadron TWO.

Achieving this enhanced operational readiness required a

seamless, months-long partnership between the shipyard's civilian workforce and the submarine's crew.

"To have been a part of such a high performing and very capable Ship's Force and project team combination has been a great experience," said Andrew Stark, North Dakota project superintendent.

"Everyone involved was bought in, stayed the course and executed the fastest, most aggressive end game in recent history on a major availability at PNSY."

As America's leader for attack submarine maintenance, repair and modernization, Portsmouth Naval Shipyard delivers the decisive edge required to master an era of evolving threats. It stands at the forefront of America's commitment to peace through strength, delivering combat-ready submarines that are lethal, resilient, and prepared to win. The work performed at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard is a direct contribution to national security, ensuring the U.S. Navy remains the most dominant maritime force anywhere in the world.

From Hanna Lanoie, Aug. 31, 2026