Topping Out Ceremony Marks Investment in Future of Submarine Readiness



Stakeholders, engineers, and construction crew members pose for a group photo in front of the new Nuclear Regional Maintenance Department facility at Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay, Ga., Jan. 29, 2026. The group gathered to celebrate a topping out ceremony, marking a major construction milestone for the project. (U.S. Navy Photo by Yan Kennon)
From Jeffrey Hamlin, NAVFAC Public Affairs

A topping out ceremony was held Jan. 29 to mark a major milestone in the construction of a new facility for the Nuclear Regional Maintenance Department (NRMD) at Naval Submarine Base (NSB) Kings Bay, Georgia.

Hosted by Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command (NAVFAC) Southeast, the event celebrated the placement of the final steel beam on the structure, symbolizing significant progress toward completion of a centralized, state-of-the-art facility designed to support critical maintenance and repair operations for Trident-equipped submarines.

A topping out ceremony is a tradition that dates back centuries to celebrate when a structure reaches its final height. While some ceremonies involve hoisting a tree or flag, the focus here was on the final beam itself, which was signed by the project's stakeholders, engineers, and construction crews. Its placement serves as a powerful tribute to their hard work and signifies the successful completion of the structural phase.

"This topping out, just over a year after breaking ground, is a testament to the skill and dedication of our team," said NAVFAC Southeast Executive Officer Capt. Elizabeth Durika. "This facility is a critical investment in our nation's strategic deterrence, and this progress brings us one step closer to providing a state-of-the-art space to ensure our submarine force remains ready for decades to come."

The construction has progressed rapidly since the project began. Lt. Cmdr. John Nurthen, construction management team leader, highlighted the significant accomplishments of the construction team.

"The sheer scale of work accomplished on this site is remarkable. Our partners have moved mountains, literally," said Nurthen. "We removed and excavated over four feet of rock and soil from the entire project site, replacing nearly 35,000 cubic yards of unsuitable soils to create a stable foundation. We have erected over 530 tons of structural steel, drilled and placed nearly 3,000 concrete piles, and poured over 100,000 square feet of structural concrete. This milestone is a credit to the incredible effort of every worker on this project."

The new $136 million facility was announced at a groundbreaking ceremony on Jan. 15, 2025. Its purpose is to consolidate NRMD operations, which are currently scattered across NSB Kings Bay in temporary locations and shared facilities. The centralized hub will include nuclear repair

shops, ship services support areas, and applied instruction spaces, significantly enhancing communication and collaboration for the maintenance and repair of Trident-equipped submarines.

“Today’s milestone represents far more than the final beam being set in place; it marks a major step toward providing our skilled civilians and Sailors with a state-of-the-art workspace to support and sustain the nuclear propulsion plants that power our nation’s number one strategic deterrent,” said James Haas, director of the Nuclear Regional Maintenance Department. Haas emphasized the human element behind the achievement, adding, “This facility is an investment in our future and in the people who carry out this mission every day. We are grateful for the dedication of everyone in turning this dream into a reality.”

The project is being managed by NAVFAC Southeast with BL Harbert International as the primary contractor. It is scheduled for completion by December 2028.

Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Southeast, headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida, provides planning, design, construction, contracting, environmental services, public works, real estate and facility maintenance for the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, Army, Air Force, Space Force, and other federal agencies across the Southeast. Its area of responsibility covers installations from Charleston, South Carolina, to Corpus Christi, Texas, and extends south to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.