

Portsmouth Delivers Submarine USS California from Availability in Record Time



USS California (SSN 781) departs for sea trials June 6 after completing a scheduled maintenance period at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine. *U.S. NAVY / Jim Cleveland*
KITTERY, Maine – Portsmouth Naval Shipyard delivered Virginia-class attack submarine USS California (SSN 781) back to the fleet June 15 as the fastest availability of its kind since the Navy adjusted the Virginia-class maintenance cycle, said Bianca Mireles of the shipyard’s public affairs office.

Virginia-class submarines currently undergo an extended docking selected restricted availability (EDSRA) at the six-year mark. Prior to 2015, the maintenance cycle was just four years.

Completion of California’s maintenance availability displayed tremendous schedule acceleration following the initial impact of the pandemic, resulting in a record setting delivery.

California and her crew of 15 officers and more than 115 enlisted personnel arrived at PNS in May 2019. California Project Superintendent Dave Simoneau applauded his team and the ship’s crew for their accomplishment.

“The workforce at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard and the crew of California have proven what teamwork, respect, and ownership can accomplish,” said Simoneau. “The success achieved in maintaining the EDSRA schedule is the direct result of these men and women leaning in and owning it every day! They are the reason we are able to win the ‘race to combat readiness’ and return California to the fleet in record time to help protect our nation.”

Throughout the availability, the team upheld Portsmouth's legacy of first-time quality. Shipyard Commander Capt. Daniel Ettlich commented on the team's commitment to excellence.

"There is immense pride in knowing PNS bought back time for fleet-readiness. It is a monumental accomplishment to return California to the seas, combat-ready and modernized, to support our national security despite the once-in-a-century obstacles brought forth by COVID-19. Our people took ownership to weather the storm and delivered on our commitment to support America's Navy," said Ettlich.

California is the seventh Navy ship, and first submarine, to be named after the Golden State. It is the eighth Virginia-class nuclear-powered submarine built to excel in anti-submarine warfare; anti-ship warfare; strike warfare; special operations; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; irregular warfare; and mine warfare missions. California was commissioned Oct. 29, 2011. California's motto is *silentium est aureum* (silence is golden), which pays tribute to both the submarine force's motto, the silent service, and California's state motto, the golden state.

Portsmouth Naval Shipyard is the Navy's center of excellence for fast attack submarine maintenance, modernization, and repair. The on-time or early completion of submarine maintenance availabilities is critical to maintaining warfighter readiness. As a field activity of NAVSEA, PNS is committed to maximizing fleet readiness by safely delivering first-time quality, on time, and on budget.