

Second Cadre of Royal Australian Navy Officers Graduate from Nuclear Power School while First Enlisted Sailors Enter



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Goose Creek, South Carolina –

A further three Royal Australian Navy (RAN) Officers graduated the U.S. Navy's Nuclear Power School (NPS), Oct. 27, marking continued progress in Australia's goal to operate conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines (SSNs).

This second cohort of RAN Officers started NPS in April 2023, and followed the RAN personnel to graduate in July. NPS is one of the U.S. Department of Defense's most rigorous and demanding schools.

The three students started NPS in April 2023, becoming the second group of RAN personnel to graduate one of the Department of Defense's most rigorous and demanding schools.

"I had heard that nuclear power school was extremely challenging and it definitely was," said one of the students. "Being here in the U.S., attending school, and ultimately helping to prepare Australia for its own SSN capability is a

true honor. I already loved being a submarine officer, and am really excited to become a nuclear-qualified submarine officer.”

The RAN Officers’ will follow the July graduates for further training in an operating nuclear propulsion plant. The officers will then complete a Submarine Officer Basic Course before assignment to an American Virginia-class SSN to continue their training and qualifications with on-board experience.

In another AUKUS milestone, the first cohort of RAN enlisted sailors arrived in Charleston, South Carolina and commenced their training at the Naval Nuclear Power Training Command. Similar to their officer counterparts, these sailors will complete Nuclear Power School and nuclear prototype training before being assigned to a Virginia-class submarine.

NPS trains officers and enlisted sailors in the science and engineering principles that are fundamental to the design, operation, and maintenance of naval nuclear propulsion plants.

“The officers and sailors graduating from the U.S. Navy’s nuclear training programs will form the nucleus of the RAN’s nuclear-qualified submariners,” said Capt. Lincoln Reifsteck the AUKUS Integration and Acquisition Program Manager. “Through them, Australia will develop its sovereign ability to operate and supervise their own conventionally armed nuclear-powered submarine fleet.”

“Today marks yet another step forward in building the Royal Australian Navy’s sovereign nuclear-powered submarine capability,” said Vice Adm. Jonathan Mead, the Director-General of the Australian Submarine Agency. “Through AUKUS, Australia is leveraging the decades of nuclear propulsion experience to safely operate, build and maintain our own fleet of conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarines.”

There will be more than 15 RAN officers and sailors enrolled in nuclear training by the end of this year.

“I could not be more proud of all of the Royal Australian Navy officers and sailors who have attended the U.S. Nuclear Power School,” said the Chief of the Royal Australian Navy, Vice Adm. Mark Hammond. “It’s exciting to see our second cohort graduate from the program. These exceptional members of our Navy are charting the course for our future, receiving incredible training for our future submarine capability.”

Supporting Australia’s acquisition of conventionally armed nuclear-powered submarines for the Royal Australian Navy is the first major initiative under [AUKUS](#).

The leaders of the three partner nations announced the [Optimal Pathway](#) for the acquisition on March 13, 2023.