

USS Cheyenne to Lead Los Angeles-Class Submarine Life Extension



Los Angeles-Class fast-attack submarine USS Cheyenne (SSN 773) and its crew arrive at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam after completing a deployment in 2019. U.S. Navy / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Daniel Hinton
ARLINGTON, Va. – The last Los Angeles-class nuclear-powered attack submarine (SSN) built, USS Cheyenne, will be the first of the class selected to go through a service life-extension program, a senior Navy admiral said.

The Navy is planning to refuel six Los Angeles-class SSNs, said Adm. Frank Caldwell, director of the Navy's Nuclear Power Program, speaking Nov. 16 in a webinar for the annual symposium of the naval Submarine League.

The Navy is undertaking the effort to shore up the numbers of attack submarines in the fleet as other boats in the Los Angeles class are decommissioned in order to partially fill in the "trough" in the mid-2020s when the inventory of SSNs declines to 41 boats.

"We will extend these boats for another operating cycle," Caldwell said. "To get after this, over the last two years, we've been making the required investments in cranes, equipment and facilities to support these refuelings at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard [Kittery, Maine]. This is a big effort, and there is a lot of work going on."

Rear Adm. Ed Anderson, commander, Undersea Warfare, also speaking in the webinar, said the Navy is hoping to squeeze more than a 10-year nominal operational cycle out of each of the six submarines in the life-extension program.

"We're gathering the data to give the fleet as much time as possible," he said. Refueling of the Cheyenne will begin in February 2022, Caldwell said.