PCU New Mexico (SSN 779) Delivered to Navy Four Months Early

By Team Submarine Public Affairs

WASHINGTON — The Navy took delivery of its newest attack submarine, PCU New Mexico (SSN 779), from Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding (NGSB) Dec. 29, four months earlier than its contract delivery date. New Mexico is the sixth Virginia-class submarine and the third delivered by NGSB.

“New Mexico performed superbly on sea trials,” said Rear Adm. William Hilarides, Program Executive Officer for Submarines. “Her early delivery keeps us firmly on pace for a 60-month construction span by the end of the Block II contract.”

Capt. Michael Jabaley, Virginia-class Program Manager, commented, “With the delivery of the sixth submarine, the Virginia Program continues to provide needed capability to the fleet.”

USS North Carolina (SSN 777) and USS New Hampshire (SSN 778), the two submarines delivered prior to New Mexico, were completed after 82 and 71 months, respectively. New Mexico completed construction in just 70 months.

“Raising the bar yet again, the Virginia shipbuilding team has completed the fastest delivery to date, with further improvement soon to follow. This improvement in performance positions the team to double the production rate to two submarines per year in 2011. Keeping the production rate at two per year is critical to maintaining the Navy’s Attack Submarine inventory,” Jabaley added.

New Mexico’s delivery in 2009 wraps up a successful year for the Virginia-class program. Earlier accomplishments include beginning the construction of PCU North Dakota (SSN 784) March 2; the keel-laying ceremony of PCU California’s (SSN 781) May 1; USS Texas (SSN 775) completion of the Virginia-class submarines’ first Arctic Ocean testing in November; transfers of USS Hawaii (SSN 776) and Texas to their new homeport of Pearl Harbor in July and November respectively; and the christening ceremony of PCU Missouri’s (SSN 780) Dec. 5.

Virginia-class submarines are flexible, multi-mission platforms designed to operate in both open-ocean and littoral waters. Their inherent stealth, endurance, and firepower enable them to support the United States seapower core capabilities of forward presence, deterrence, sea control, power projection, and maritime security.

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