

Russia's Nuclear Submarine Construction Reaches Post-Soviet High

By [The Barents Observer](#)

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The crew of a nuclear submarine built at Sevmash shipyard. **Lev Fedoseyev / TASS**

Russia's Sevmash shipyard, the only one in the country that builds nuclear-powered submarines, saw a record year in 2021. Three subs were handed over to the Navy, two were put on water and construction started on another two.

Not since the late days of the Soviet Union have the workers at the building and repair yard Severodvinsk been busier than now. Moscow's modernization program for its Navy over the last decade stands in sharp contrast to considerable neglect in the years after the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

2022 marks 10 years since the Russian Navy's first fourth generation multi-purpose submarine, the Severodvinsk, successfully launched a Kalibr cruise missile from a submerged position in the White Sea. While it took nearly 20 years to complete construction of the Severodvinsk, later Yasen-M class vessels are being built faster.

Construction of the Novosibirsk, which was commissioned for the Navy in late December 2021, took 8 years.

Similar construction times are also being seen for the new ballistic missile submarines of the Borei-A class in the wake of the Yury Dolgoruky, which took 16 years from being laid down in 1996 to commissioning for the Northern Fleet in 2012. The Knyaz Oleg, handed over to the Pacific Fleet just before Christmas last year took 7 years to build.

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As of Jan. 1, 2022, 13 nuclear-powered submarines are at different stages of construction at the Sevmash yard and are all expected to be delivered to the navy before 2027.

While high-profile publicity is given to laying-down ceremonies, launching and commissioning of ballistic missile subs and multi-purpose subs, far less is known about special-purpose subs. The Barents Observer has on several occasions reported about the Belgord, the world's longest submarine built on a modified Oscar-II class hull. The submarine will be the carrier of the new Poseidon nuclear-powered, nuclear-armed drones and likely be based with the Pacific Fleet later this year.

Two other carriers of the Poseidon drone are currently under construction at the Sevmash yard, the Khabarovsk and Ulyanovsk.

Other unconfirmed submarines that might be in the pipeline for construction in years to come are two more Borei-A class vessels, two more Poseidon carriers and one or two special-purpose mini-submarine to sail for GUGI, the Defense Ministry's Main Directorate for Deep Sea Research.

Design work for fifth generation nuclear-powered submarines, referred to as the Husky class, is said to be underway, but so far no contracts have been signed.

In addition to new submarines, the Sevmash yard is busy working on repair and modernization of the large nuclear-powered battle cruiser Admiral Nakhimov. Originally commissioned into the Soviet Navy in 1988, the warship was rarely deployed to sea and has been in Severodvinsk for the last 23 years. If no further delays are announced, the battlecruiser will be re-commissioned for the Northern Fleet in 2023.

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