

King Charles III Marks Double Milestone for UK Submarine Program in 'Royal Port of Barrow'

October 7, 2025



King Charles III has marked a historic double milestone for the UK's nuclear submarine program at BAE Systems in Barrow-in-Furness. His Majesty officially welcomed the latest Astute Class attack submarine, HMS Agamemnon, into the Royal Navy fleet and conferred Royal status on the Port of Barrow, recognising the community's enduring role in national security.

In a separate, simultaneous ceremony led by the Defence Secretary, **steel was cut on the fourth and final Dreadnought Class submarine, King George VI**, marking the official start of its construction.

Commitment to the Nuclear Deterrent

The day's events underscore the Government's unwavering commitment to the **'triple-lock'** on the nuclear deterrent: building four new nuclear submarines, maintaining continuous at-sea nuclear deterrence, and delivering all future upgrades. The Dreadnought Class, set to enter service from the early 2030s, will be the most technically advanced submarines ever operated by the Royal Navy, safeguarding the nation for decades.

Defence Secretary John Healey MP said: "Submarine building is a vital UK industry, sustaining thousands of jobs and apprenticeships up and down the country, all while continuing to keep the country safe around the clock. Barrow is an outstanding example of security and growth working hand-in-hand – adding a new attack submarine to the Royal Navy's fleet, building the next generation of nuclear-armed submarines, and simultaneously supporting thousands of skilled local jobs and apprenticeships."

The Defence Nuclear Enterprise currently supports over **47,000 jobs** across the UK, a figure expected to grow to **65,000 by 2030** due to sustained government investment. In Barrow alone, the sector now supports more than **13,500 jobs**, growing by over 7% since July 2024.

Chief of Defence Nuclear Madelaine McTernan, CB, said: “The steel cutting of the fourth boat in the Dreadnought Class is a significant milestone marking positive progress in this extraordinary programme. Delivering these submarines is a truly national endeavour with a vast UK supply chain, culminating in the build at the Royal Port of Barrow. It is a proud moment for the thousands who contribute to the Defence Nuclear Enterprise. Today’s events celebrate Barrow’s world-class workforce and our shared commitment to delivering the submarines that safeguard our nation. We are proud to build the future of NATO security right here in Royal Barrow.”

Investment in Skills and Community

The Royal status conferred on the Port of Barrow highlights the dedication and expertise of its skilled workforce, solidifying the town’s position as the home of UK nuclear submarine building.

The government is backing this commitment with major investment, including a **£200 million Transformation Fund** as part of the ‘**Plan for Barrow**’. This plan targets local improvements in transport, education, housing, and skills to enable and sustain the workforce needed for the Ministry of Defence’s major programs.

A further **£6 billion** is being invested in the defence nuclear sector over the current Spending Review period, including in Barrow, with a goal of increasing the submarine production rate to a new submarine every **18 months** in future years. The government is working with industry to create **22,000 apprenticeship and 9,000 graduate defence nuclear roles** over the next decade.

Charles Woodburn, Chief Executive BAE Systems, said: “This is a proud day for Barrow and everyone involved in the wider UK submarine enterprise who are working collaboratively to deliver the Dreadnought and Astute class submarines. We take great pride in our role in this national endeavour and in our contribution to safeguarding the UK’s security.”

Currently, BAE Systems’ Submarines Academy for Skills and Knowledge has around **1,800 apprentices and 500 graduates** training in Barrow-in-Furness. The Astute Class submarines, now including **HMS Agamemnon**, provide global strategic intelligence and protection for NATO and coalition operations.