

RTX's Raytheon delivers first Next Generation Jammer shipsets to the Royal Australian Air Force



Technology will enhance country's electronic warfare capabilities

From RTX

ARLINGTON, V.A. (April 20, 2026) – Raytheon, an RTX (NYSE: RTX) business, has delivered its first Next Generation Jammer (NGJ) pods to the Royal Australian Air Force.

NGJ is a cooperative development and production program with the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). It is an airborne electronic attack system containing active electronically scanned arrays that radiate in the mid-band frequency range. By disrupting enemy radars and communication systems, NGJ enables aircrew to remain undetected while airborne, allowing

them to execute their missions with greater safety and effectiveness.

“This delivery marks a significant milestone in our collaborative efforts with the U.S. Navy and RAAF on NGJ,” said Barbara Borgonovi, president of Naval Power at Raytheon. “This advanced technology will greatly enhance RAAF’s electronic warfare capabilities, safeguarding vital assets on its aircraft and more effectively neutralizing adversary technologies across a wide range of missions.”

Raytheon has been partnering with the U.S. Navy and RAAF since the inception of the NGJ program. This first delivery of shipsets occurred ahead of schedule in September 2025, with future deliveries continuing through 2026. Raytheon is also providing on-site deployment and maintenance support in Australia to help support operational and mission readiness.

**New long-range smart weapon
flies hundreds of miles in
first test**



**The first JDAM LR cruises above the U.S. Navy's Point Mugu Sea Range, California, on April 1, 2026. (U.S. Navy photo)
From Chris Bishop at Boeing, April 20, 2026**

Boeing, U.S. Navy complete initial flight tests of the JDAM LR, validating powered flight and long-range capability.

Boeing and U.S. Navy teammates completed a series of flight tests last week for the GBU-75 Joint Direct Attack Munition Long Range (JDAM LR) at the Navy's Point Mugu Sea Range, California.

- JDAM is a low-cost guidance kit that converts existing free-fall bombs into accurately guided smart weapons. JDAM LR adds long-range capability and is the newest in the JDAM family of systems.

Why it matters: The tests validated the weapon's ability to operate from an F/A-18 Super Hornet fighter and sustain powered flight of a 500-pound (230-kilogram) JDAM.

- Military Code GPS navigation systems on JDAM LR tracked satellites for the entire test, improving the weapon's

resilience and accuracy against GPS jamming and spoofing.

How they did it: An F/A-18E Super Hornet from China Lake Naval Weapons Station flew to Point Mugu and released an inert JDAM LR.

- The first test, on April 1, demonstrated safe separation, engine start, cruise and guidance through terminal flight and impact in water after a 34-minute flight. The weapon sustained powered flight for nearly 200 nautical miles and landed within meters of its planned target.
- For the next test, on April 3, teams flew a second planned flight profile, successfully incorporating altitude changes and weapon maneuvering during an otherwise similar flight.

U.S. Forces Disable Vessel Attempting to Enter Iranian Port, Violate Blockade



From U.S. Central Command, April 19, 2026

TAMPA, Fla. – U.S. forces operating in the Arabian Sea enforced naval blockade measures against an Iranian-flagged cargo vessel attempting to sail toward an Iranian port, April 19.

Guided-missile destroyer USS Spruance (DDG 111) intercepted M/V Touska as it transited the north Arabian Sea at 17 knots enroute to Bandar Abbas, Iran. American forces issued multiple warnings and informed the Iranian-flagged vessel it was in violation of the U.S. blockade.

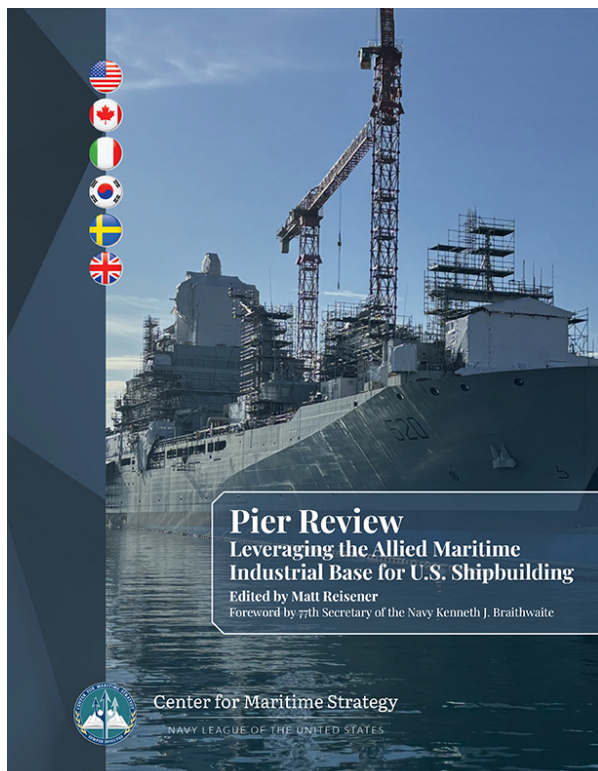
After Touska's crew failed to comply with repeated warnings over a six-hour period, Spruance directed the vessel to evacuate its engine room. Spruance disabled Touska's propulsion by firing several rounds from the destroyer's 5-inch MK 45 Gun into Touska's engine room. U.S. Marines from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit later boarded the non-compliant vessel, which remains in U.S. custody.

American forces acted in a deliberate, professional, and proportional manner to ensure compliance. Since the blockade's commencement, U.S. forces have directed 25 commercial vessels to turn around or return to an Iranian port.

Maritime Industrial Base in Crisis, New CMS Report Finds

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However, many of the United States' maritime allies are experiencing similar challenges to their domestic shipbuilding industries and have adopted creative approaches to solving them. The United States must utilize the experience, knowledge and resources of its allies to develop the best strategy possible for building a stronger, more resilient MIB.

Accordingly, the Center for Maritime Strategy conducted a study of America's allied maritime industrial base to examine how five American allies (South Korea, Italy, Canada, Sweden and the United Kingdom) build commercial and naval ships, how they support their shipbuilding industries and what lessons America can learn from its allies about how to revitalize its MIB.

Each country faces similar shipbuilding challenges to America but has taken a different approach to addressing

them. Although South Korea and Italy have successfully maintained strong commercial and naval shipbuilding sectors, Canada and the United Kingdom have largely allowed their commercial sectors to atrophy while primarily focusing on warship construction, while Sweden has seen both sectors significantly diminish and maintains only marginal naval shipbuilding capabilities. Many of America's allies have successfully maintained strong MIBs by streamlining the process for designing and building ships. Among the countries studied, the most successful nations at sustaining strong commercial and naval shipbuilding industries have found ways to minimize late-stage design changes, build a greater variety of ships based on a common design and establish a shipbuilding culture which emphasizes delivering ships on time and under budget.

Similarly, the study illustrates how government investments in their MIBs can set their shipbuilding industries up for success, including by training the next generation of skilled tradespeople and supporting greater supply chain resilience. America's most successful shipbuilding allies have also heavily invested in integrating new technology into their shipyards, fully embracing automation, digitization and artificial intelligence to support their work – often with strong government support for these efforts.

America can build a stronger, more capable MIB by partnering with and learning from its allies. Accordingly, this study provides recommendations for how America can apply these insights to support its MIB while embracing greater multilateral maritime cooperation.

CMS and speakers from the allied nations in the report will host a panel discussion on the new report on Tuesday, April 21 from 3:30-4:30 p.m. in the Cherry Blossom Ballroom.

Recommendations			
<p>Reforming the Design and Build Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design, then bend: Only begin vessel construction once the design is 100 percent complete to avoid disruptions. • Make VCMs the norm: Use vessel construction managers (VCMs) to oversee all government shipbuilding projects to streamline production and design processes. • Embrace modularity: Creating common designs to be used across multiple types of ships could reduce delays in the design process and increase interoperability. 	<p>Embracing New and Emergent Technologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digitize, automate, and get “smart”: Integrate automation, digitization, and AI in shipyards to empower—not replace—the existing workforce. • Build ships to sail, engineer them to last: Increase operability by incorporating condition-based maintenance (CBM) in ship design to reduce the unpredictability of maintenance and repairs • Cross the digital divide: Embrace digitization by allocating Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Program budgets to digitization, consulting mariners to address their needs, building worker trust in digital systems, and avoiding disrupting essential shipbuilding processes. 	<p>Increasing Allied Cooperation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage maritime alliances: Expand opportunities to collaborate with allies on shipbuilding, modeling existing frameworks like AUKUS, MASGA, and OCCAR. • Build a “bridge” over troubled waters: When American yards are at capacity, construct the initial ships in a multi-vessel purchase in allied ports while simultaneously investing in U.S. shipyards to eventually onshore construction. • Use allied ports in a storm: Engage U.S. maritime allies to provide drydock and port access to the U.S. Navy, especially those with maritime infrastructure in the Pacific. • “All hands on deck” for skilled labor: Supplement the domestic shipbuilding labor pool with high-skilled migrants from allied countries. 	
<p>Ensuring On-Time Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentivize success: Offer financial incentives (but not punitive fees) for on-time and on-budget delivery of ships. • Small blocks stack just as well as large ones: Order ships in smaller blocks to allow greater flexibility in design and capabilities and avoid cascading delays across larger block buys. 	<p>Training Current and Future Shipbuilders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate, empower, lead: Expand shipbuilding apprenticeship opportunities and increase support to trainees. • Engineer the future of naval architecture: Expand existing and create new naval architecture and marine engineering programs to address labor shortages. 	<p>Strengthening U.S. Supply Chains</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you need it, print it: Increase additive manufacturing capabilities and training opportunities to mitigate supply chain gaps and reduce overreliance on sole-source manufacturers. • Build supply chain contingencies: Reduce supply chain vulnerabilities in a conflict by developing contingencies which identify alternate sources and lean on dependable allies. 	<p>Revitalizing Commercial Shipbuilding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chart a collaborative course: Facilitate collaboration across government and industry to strengthen America as a competitor in the commercial shipbuilding sector. • Shared insight, collective impact: Share best practices to encourage cooperation among U.S. and AMIB companies to strengthen the shipbuilding industry.

Read the full report [here](#).

Q&A: Fincantieri Marine Group CEO George Moutafis



Fincantieri Marine Group CEO George Moutafis, right, tours company facilities. (CREDIT: Fincantieri Marine Group)

In February 2026, Fincantieri Marine Group (Booth 1223) issued the following release:

“As you may have seen in NAVSEA’s press release, the U.S. Navy tapped Fincantieri to build four of the first wave of Medium Landing Ships (LSMs) for the Marine Corps. Our \$1B investment over the last 18 years to create concurrent production lines across our Wisconsin system of shipyards has positioned us to be a prime player in the American shipbuilding renaissance. This announcement represents a good start of follow-on workload, part of the framework agreed with the Navy to

ensure stability following the announcement in November. Details are still being worked out between us and the Navy, and we will communicate any developments, as soon as they solidify. Our intent is to quickly build as many vessels as the Navy will trust us with, in the LSM class and other classes that our armed forces require, to contribute to our nation's needs."

Fincantieri Marine Group CEO George Moutafis later discussed the LSM program's vessel construction management (VCM) concept with Senior Editor Richard R. Burgess.

The Vessel Construction Management concept proved successful with Philly Shipyards and its National Security Multi-Mission Vessel (NSMV) program. What advantages and disadvantages do you see with the VCM concept?

MOUTAFIS: Advantages: I trust our Navy wants to see whether this mechanism can deliver quality vessels fast, by streamlining oversight and creating unity of effort. Such benefits can be achieved if the concept is applied in its intended form:

A key aspect is to empower the VCM to make decisions on construction, favoring schedule, without compromising quality and without seeking constant guidance or approval from the Navy. When combined with a complete and final design and a commercial-type relationship between the VCM and shipbuilders, this can be truly powerful and harness efficiency in decision-making and speed.

So, overall, this concept is aimed at simplifying things. From that vantage point, this approach aligns perfectly with our goal of fast serial production of naval vessels, and we are ready to continue our partnership with the Navy and help them test this concept.

Disadvantages: More than disadvantages, it will be key for all parties involved (the Navy, the VCM, the shipbuilder(s) to

embrace the concept, draw the relevant lines and collectively ensure we do not fall into mishaps of the past that might jeopardize what this concept is trying to achieve.



The U.S. Navy has issued a request for proposal for a vessel construction manager to oversee the acquisition of the new Medium Landing Ship. This strategy is designed to maximize commercial practices to accelerate delivery, improve cost discipline, and expand the U.S. shipbuilding industrial base, with a contract award anticipated for mid-2026. (CREDIT: Naval Sea Systems Command)

With the VCM chosen as the LSM program management concept, what changes will Marinette have to institute to accommodate the concept?

MOUTAFIS: We are ready. In Wisconsin we have a system of yards where we have executed successfully programs for our Navy, for our Coast Guard, but also for commercial customers, under a variety of contractual setups.

We will wait to see the details of how the Navy will position itself towards the program and how the VCM will seek to exercise oversight and work with us. We are ready to adjust to whatever those requirements are.

At first glance, an oversight and collaboration similar to the one witnessed during the NSMV program and a “build-to-print” design, for now, appear to alleviate some demands in terms of administration and engineering, allowing us to swiftly get into what we do best: swift serial construction ... but it all remains to be seen.

What adjustments, if any, will be needed for your workforce as you shift from LCS production to the LSM?

MOUTAFIS: Using a “build-to-print” approach allows construction to happen quicker. Plus, it minimizes change and prevents extensive and time-consuming design iterations.

We will need to review all the technical details, but we do not foresee major adjustments to workforce. Our system-of-yards configuration ensures agility in the workforce, rendering them able to jump from Navy standards to commercial or ABS standards.

And with the right level of sustained demand signal, we will be able to improve efficiency and speed, which will be a win for all parties. Our system of yards can accommodate multiple parallel lines, almost concurrently.

How is Marinette fairing with the nationwide shortage of skilled shipyard workers?

MOUTAFIS: No doubt, shipbuilders and the related

trades remain in high demand. We have expanded our recruiting efforts over the previous few years, and we are blessed to say that our efforts worked. Last year alone we hired nearly 800 employees and improved our retention by 50%.

Our Wisconsin operations saw positive feedback on several new initiatives over the previous 18 months, aimed at stabilizing the workforce. Efforts like cash bonuses to incentivize employee retention and tax-free subsidized childcare had a positive effect on our employees and our operations.

In years past Marinette had difficulty in retention of shipyard workers because of housing shortages in the region. Has that situation been alleviated to any degree?

MOUTAFIS: Yes, there has been a concerted effort by the local communities and developers to expand the number of local housing options that closely align to our growing workforce and their families. We believe this is less of an issue given the development and community support over the last couple of years in Northeast Wisconsin.

Is Marinette continuing with cooperative relationships with community colleges for workforce development? What is your assessment of the cooperation?

MOUTAFIS: Yes, we are continuing and seeking to expand our network of such collaborations. We have a continuously growing relationship with Northeast Wisconsin Technical College to not only reinforce the need to up-skill current employees, but also to introduce new technologies and digital tools to attract the shipbuilders of the next generation.

Imagine a not-so-distant future replete with examples of shipyard welders leveraging cobots (collaborative robots) to weld in places where it's difficult for humans to easily work. That is the future of shipbuilding

and why we're equipping our employees with digital tools like exoskeletons for demanding and repetitive tasks and augmented and virtual reality that allows workers on the deckplates to communicate challenges directly to the engineering team using a wearable digital device.

Raytheon Doubled ESSM Production in 2025



An Evolved SeaSparrow Missile is launched from a Mk 29 launcher aboard USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) in 2010. (CREDIT: U.S. Navy | Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Patrick Green)

By Richard R. Burgess, Senior Editor

Raytheon Missiles & Defense (Booth 911) doubled production of the Block II RIM-162 Evolved SeaSparrow Missile (ESSM) in 2025 as it addressed the increased demand from the U.S. Navy

and its partners in the NATO consortium, a company official told *Seapower*.

“Last year, we produced over 350 ESSM missiles, which more than doubled what we were able to deliver in 2024,” said Misty Holmes, vice president for the Shipboard Organization within the Naval Power division. Her portfolio includes the ESSM, the Rolling Airframe Missile and the Standard family of surface-to-air missiles. She noted Raytheon delivered the 500th Block II version of the ESSM last September.

“We’re continuing to increase production this year to deliver over 400 all-up rounds, and we have a North Star in terms of our production capacity to go beyond 700 per year to meet that increased demand signal and service the needs of all of our customers’ navies,” Holmes said.

The ESSM, which became operational in 2004, is a short-to-medium shipboard surface -to-air missile deployed on several classes on U.S. Navy ships, including many guided-missile destroyers, aircraft carriers and amphibious assault ships. The missile is designed to counter advanced, highly maneuverable threats, and features a warhead specifically designed to defeat hardened anti-ship cruise missiles. In 2007, a surface-to-surface/anti-low-velocity air threat capability was introduced on the missile. The missile was developed by a consortium of 12 NATO nations and has been acquired by Japan through direct commercial sales.

“I believe that gives ESSM a unique and a distinct advantage in today’s munitions programs over those that are solely developed and managed by one nation,” Holmes said. “The consortium is NATO’s largest and most successful cooperative weapons project, and it’s been together for over 15 years supporting international military industrial cooperation.

The Block II ESSM, which became operational in 2020, features an active guidance system in addition to semi-active guidance,

reducing the need for shipboard radar illumination.

“This particular capability does come with significant digital processing margin,” Holmes said, “[A]s we are focused on innovation, [we] can continue to upgrade this capability to keep it ahead of pace with the threat to ensure that we’re keeping our ships and our Sailors, both U.S. and international allies, safe and coming home.”

Recent conflicts in Ukraine and the Red Sea have spurred demand for such weapons as the ESSM, which was fired against Houthi missiles and drones during 2023 and 2024.

“I do see this as a multi-factor issue, Holmes said. “We are seeing increase in the defense budget across numerous of our customers largely in Europe as well as others due to the threats, the war in Ukraine, the realization of expenditures in the Red Sea and others. So, we are seeing that increased demand signal come in pretty globally.”

Holmes said Raytheon is focused on the increased demand signal.

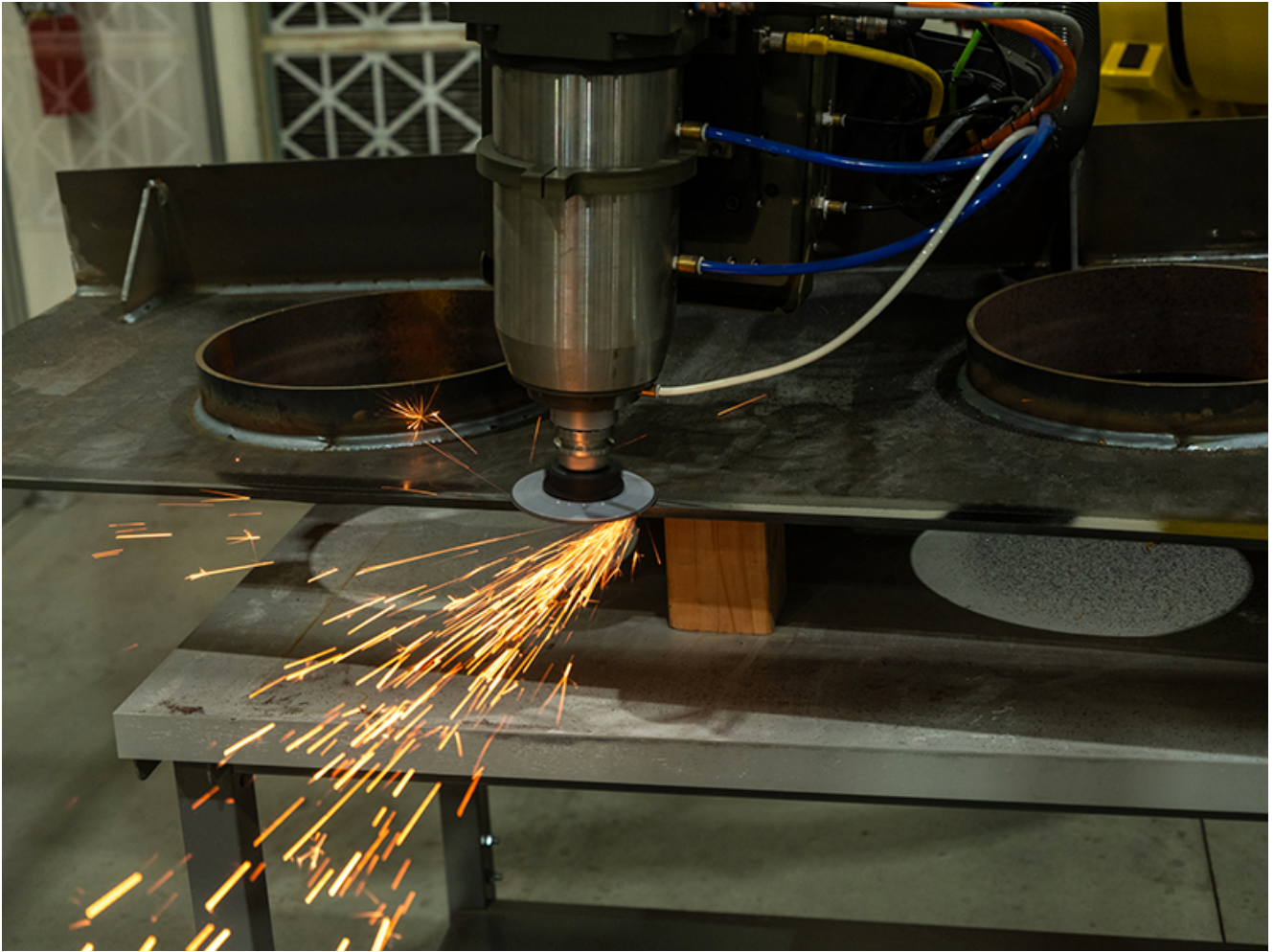
“This production really does showcase exceptional program performance that has been heavily supported by a very robust supply chain that’s been meeting and exceeding targets, and that supply chain is extremely diverse and global, she said. “Our suppliers, in ESSM’s case, are not just suppliers, there are partners, international industrial-based partners. Two areas that have been really big on this production are our industrial partners delivering on their contracts to make all those components ready for integration, and then the dedicated action by the Raytheon factory teams to improve throughput and remain focused on the goal that we have to meet and exceed our production targets. We’ve been working on test efficiencies, optimization and throughput to ensure we can continue to improve on our delivery.”

Is Raytheon working on a Block III ESSM? Holmes would only

say, “We are working on enhanced kinematics and maneuverability, things that will keep this weapon system ahead of the threat for the next few decades. But we’re eager to participate with the U.S. in the consortium in their next significant variant.

“We don’t sit back and rest on our laurels that what we’ve delivered is good enough,” she said. “We’re constantly adding capability to the suite of capabilities to make sure [that we are] staying ahead of the threat and those are investments we’re making in future ESSM capabilities as well in terms of funding new research and development ahead from government requirements.”

HII Moves Further into Physical AI for Shipbuilding



A GrayMatter Robotics technology performs autonomous grinding to an HII foundation project that used internal research and development funds.

By Brett Davis

Shipbuilding giant HII (Booth 923) has added another artificial intelligence partner to its shipbuilding program, taking another step toward adding “physical AI” to the process of constructing Navy ships.

In early April, the company announced it signed a memorandum of understanding with Carson, California-based GrayMatter Robotics to explore integrating GMR’s physical AI into shipbuilding operations, including for surface preparation, coating and inspection.

The companies will identify and potentially pursue future opportunities in four areas that include autonomous shipbuilding capability development; integration of GMR

technologies with other shipbuilding technology initiatives; workforce training to extend automation; and acceleration and scaling of unmanned system production.

“Our shipbuilding throughput was up 14% in 2025 and we are looking for an additional 15% increase in 2026,” said Eric Chewning, HII’s executive vice president of maritime systems and corporate strategy. “By working with new partners like GMR we can further augment our workforce and speed up U.S. Navy shipbuilding production.”

This follows on to a similar announcement from February, when HII signed an MOU with Ohio-based Path Robotics to incorporate physical AI for welding.

HII said much of the work that would be pursued by these companies currently is “hands-on and highly skilled,” but AI-driven technologies “offer promising opportunities to support these critical processes by reducing repetitive work and improving consistency to help accelerate delivery timelines and meet the U.S. Navy’s growing demand.”

Chewning said the introduction of physical AI is just one step of a series of actions HII is taking to improve shipbuilding, from increasing its supplier base to hiring and retaining new workers to making capital investments.

“And finally, what brings us here today, we are investing in new industry 4.0 technologies like digital engineering, additive manufacturing, enterprise AI and physical AI to drive overall shipyard efficiency,” he told reporters in a call about the announcement. “By working with new physical AI partners like GrayMatter Robotics and integrating them into our high-yield production robotics initiative, or HYPR, we can further augment the AI workforce and speed up the shipbuilding process by bringing automation into more areas of production.”

So far, shipyard automation remains limited to repeatable

Students with Science, Games and Fun



Kids raise their hands to answer a question during a Mad Science presentation

The annual STEM Expo kicked off Sea-Air-Space 2026 by giving students of all ages a look at the various technologies that underpin the maritime world of the sea services.

Attendees got examples of chemical reactions from Mad Science presentations, learned some of the principles of aerodynamics, saw how many marbles an aluminum foil boat could hold, and more, including getting a close-up look at welding to build ships.

STEM Expo sponsor HII featured a variety of exhibits at its booth, including the marble-carrying boats and welding systems. John Walker, 043 facilities manager at Newport News Shipbuilding, helped students work with an introductory

welding program.

“This introduces these kids to things that they’re probably not exposed to on a daily basis,” he said. “Even at the schools, they probably don’t talk a lot about welding, or fitting up steel, or even shipbuilding. So, STEM is very important to expose these kids to this type of technology and the things we do at the shipyard.”

The Navy League created the STEM Expo to give students interested in science, technology, engineering and math an opportunity to enjoy interactive workshops and hands-on demonstrations while accessing real-world career information.



Students are captivated by dry ice during a Mad Science demonstration at STEM Expo.

HII’s Buzz Donnelly, vice president of customer affairs and a former Navy carrier pilot and ship commander, said he has “spent a lot of time reaping the benefits of forums like this.” He said the STEM event is a great lead-off event for

local visitors and for Sea-Air-Space attendees from all over the world to share with their families.

“It’s extremely important to what we need as a defense industry, because these are the future engineers, the future tradesmen and laborers, that our heavy labor-centric force structure depends on. Regardless of how much we modernize with technology, automation, robots and cobots, we still rely on the people,” Donnelly said.



An attendee gets up close and personal with a pair of virtual-reality goggles at STEM Expo

“Having these young folks here today to see how exciting all the different aspects are, from the shipbuilding to the missiles and aerospace industry, [and] medicines here, is just a real motivating opportunity for them to get them excited about all the things that we do in this industry, to get excited about school, and I know for certain we’re going to have some of them that come in and benefit our nation and this industrial base in the future.”

Exhibitors at the event, which was also sponsored by Smart Learning Solutions, included universities, defense-related government agencies, science organizations and others.

Navy Awards Marinette Marine \$30 million Contract toward Medium Landing Ships



Navy Awards Marinette Marine \$30 million Contract toward Medium Landing Ships

By Richard R. Burgess, Senior Editor

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy has awarded a contract to a shipbuilder for materials and engineering activities for the

first four Block 1 medium landing ships (LSMs).

“Marinette Marine Corp., Marinette, Wisconsin, is awarded a \$30,000,000 not-to-exceed undefinitized contract action for advance procurement of long lead time material and associated engineering and design activities in support of four Medium Landing Ship Block 1,” the Department of War said in an April 14 contract announcement.

Marinette Marine Corp. is a unit of Fincantieri Marine Group FMG), which also is building two Constellation-class guided-missile frigates for the U.S. Navy. The Naval Sea Systems Command obligated \$15 million of fiscal 2025 funds at the time of the contract award.

The Navy plans to procure 35 LSMs to support the Marine Corps' expeditionary advance base operations.

“Enhancing our maritime dominance depends on a modernized fleet and a strong industrial base, and today's contract helps with both – it reduces schedule risk and enables our shipbuilders to rapidly transition to ship construction,” said Secretary of the Navy John C. Phelan in a post on X that also announced the contract award.

“Work will be performed in Marinette, Wisconsin (46%); De Pere, Wisconsin (39%); and Kenner, Louisiana (15%),” the Department of War's announcement said. “Work is expected to be completed by September 2027.”

In December 2025, the Navy and Marine Corps jointly announced Damen Naval's LST 100 landing ship would serve as the baseline to field a “proven, non-developmental design – would serve as the baseline to help rapidly field LSM capability,” according to the Naval Sea Systems Command. “The LSM will fill the capability gap between smaller, short-range landing craft and the Navy's long-duration, multi-purpose amphibious warfare ships. It is essential for the maneuver and sustainment of Marine forces, providing the critical littoral mobility

required in contested environments. The program will deliver a 35-ship fleet that enhances expeditionary agility and supports the Marine Corps' concept of distributed maneuver and logistics."

Key points made in Fincantieri's follow-up email announcement included the following:

- The contract supports long-lead materials procurement and early engineering and production readiness activities, enabling a potential start of construction as early as Q4 2026.
- The LSM program is a foundational element of U.S. Navy and Marine Corps force design, with up to 35 vessels planned; FMG is designated to build at least the initial four.
- The award builds on more than \$800 million in U.S. shipyard investments by Fincantieri over the past decade, supporting long-term naval and industrial capacity.

L3Harris Announces Billion Dollar Expansion to Boost

Solid Rocket Motor Production in Orange County, Virginia



Virginia Gov. Abigail Spanberger, L3Harris VP Mark Farley, and state and local leaders announce major solid rocket motor expansion in Orange County.

From L3Harris

ORANGE COUNTY, Va., April 15, 2026 – L3Harris Technologies (NYSE: LHX), Virginia Gov. Abigail Spanberger and the Orange County Board of Supervisors have announced an agreement to further expand L3Harris’ solid rocket motor production capacity at its site in Orange County with the creation of the Virginia Advanced Propulsion Facilities (VAPF).

The more than \$1 billion expansion project, which builds on a previously announced expansion at the Orange County site, is expected to more than double the manufacturing space and create more than 350 jobs over the next five years.

“L3Harris’ continued investments in solid rocket motor facilities are bolstering manufacturing capacity for key

national defense programs,” said Ken Bedingfield, President, Missile Solutions, L3Harris. “With a talented workforce and a community committed to long-term success, our expanded presence in Virginia will deliver additional capability to the Department of War and our allies.”

“I congratulate L3Harris on its historic expansion in Central Virginia,” said Gov. Spanberger. “With a deep talent pipeline and strong track record in the defense and advanced manufacturing sectors, the Commonwealth is ready to fill the hundreds of new positions coming to Orange County. L3Harris exemplifies the kind of partnership that builds the future of Virginia, and we look forward to celebrating this investment for many years to come.”

“On behalf of the Board of Supervisors and our Economic Development team, we are thrilled to recognize and support L3Harris’ \$1.265 Billion expansion and the creation of 350+ new jobs in Orange County. This is a transformational announcement that will benefit Orange County for decades,” said Orange County Board of Supervisors Chairman Bryan Nicol. “L3Harris has been an important, long-time member of our business community – making their growth and continued investment here particularly gratifying. This project is a recognition of Orange County’s strong business climate, its economic vitality and our region’s qualified workforce. The Board is grateful to be receiving a grant from Governor Spanberger’s Commonwealth’s Opportunity Fund and support from the General Assembly’s Major Employment Investment Project Approval Commission to bring this opportunity to the Commonwealth.”

“I’m pleased to see L3Harris expanding its operations in Virginia, bringing hundreds of good-paying jobs to Orange County while strengthening manufacturing capacity for critical national defense programs,” said Rep. Eugene Vindman, D-Va. “This investment will more than double their footprint and build on a long track record of success in the region. I look

forward to continuing to partner with L3Harris to support this growth, create new opportunities for our workforce, and advance the aerospace innovation that drives both our economy and our national security.”

L3Harris plans to construct new facilities at the site to support key solid rocket motor production operations spanning multiple Department of War programs. The VAPF will support company operations such as mixing, grinding, casting and final assembly.

L3Harris’ site in Virginia currently has 256,000 square feet of manufacturing space and serves as the company’s Center of Excellence for Propellant Research and Small to Medium-sized Solid Rocket Motor Production.

L3Harris is also modernizing and expanding solid rocket motor production at its sites in Camden, Arkansas, and Huntsville, Alabama. The company’s ongoing investments in new facilities, equipment and processes will enable it to double, triple and quadruple solid rocket motor production rates for a range of key programs.