

NRL's Advanced Payloads Soar into Orbit Aboard STPSat-7 Mission



Department of War (DoW) Space Test Program's (STP) STPSat-7 payload, at NASA Marshall Space Flight Center, Huntsville, Ala., June 25, 2025. (Photo by DoW Space Test Program)

From Emily Winget U.S. Naval Research Laboratory Corporate Communications, April 7, 2026

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Naval Research Laboratory (NRL) successfully launched three advanced experimental payloads aboard the Department of War (DoW) Space Test Program's (STP) Satellite-7 mission at approximately 4:33 a.m. PDT on April 7 from Vandenberg U.S. Space Force (USSF) Base, Calif.

U.S. Naval Research Laboratory (NRL) successfully launched three advanced experimental payloads aboard the [Department of War \(DoW\) Space Test Program's \(STP\) Satellite-7](#) mission at

approximately 4:33 a.m. PDT on April 7 from [Vandenberg U.S. Space Force \(USSF\) Base, Calif.](#)

NRL's payloads included the Lasersheet Anomaly Resolution and Debris Observation (LARADO) instrument; the Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) Orbiting Situational Awareness Sensor (GOSAS); and the Gadolinium Aluminum Gallium Garnet (GAGG) Radiation Instrument (GARI-1C).

The STPSat-7 spacecraft is aboard the STP-S29A mission, which uses a Northrop Grumman Minotaur IV launch vehicle, marking a significant step forward in advancing U.S. space-based capabilities for the U.S. Navy and national security. By improving understanding of the space environment and testing next-generation satellite technologies, NRL is ensuring the United States maintains its technological advantage and protects critical assets in orbit.

LARADO

One of the key NRL payloads, LARADO will directly address the growing threat of orbital debris.

"LARADO is the next step in ensuring situational awareness in space," said Andrew Nicholas, NRL Sensor Development and Applications Section Head and LARADO principal investigator. "The instrument will detect and characterize small orbital debris that cannot be observed from the ground. This is vital to understanding the space environment and will provide essential data to update orbital debris models. These updates are important to the orbital debris research community, engineers designing spacecraft to survive and minimize growth to the debris environment, satellite operators, and policy makers."

The LARADO concept began in 2012. In FY22, [NASA's Heliophysics Division](#) Space Weather Program's Orbital Debris and Space Situational Awareness portfolio within its Science Mission Directorate began funding the development of the LARADO

instrument for STPSat-7.

GOSAS

GOSAS will improve the reliability of navigation and communication systems for warfighters.

“The GOSAS is a CubeSat-compatible, programmable dual GPS receiver designed to characterize the orbital GNSS environment and produce high quality ionospheric space weather products,” said Scott Budzien, Ph.D., NRL research physicist and GOSAS principal investigator. “Understanding and predicting space weather is critical for ensuring the accuracy of GPS and the integrity of military communications.”

GOSAS is a follow-on to the NRL experiment GROUP-C (GPS Radio Occultation and Ultraviolet Photometry-Collocated) experiment on the International Space Station from 2017-2023 that serendipitously detected GPS ground interference. GOSAS originated in 2020 with the mission of increasing GPS accuracy for the warfighter.

GARI-1C

GARI-1C is set to pave the way for future defense applications from space, including detecting weapons of mass destruction. The NRL team takes technology developed for ground-based applications and tests its performance in space. Since most commercial-off-the-shelf components are not radiation-hardened, understanding how they respond to the harsh radiation environment of space is critical for future operational use.

“GARI-1C is designed to space-qualify new gamma-ray detector technology for space-based defense applications,” stated Lee Mitchell, Ph.D., NRL Research Physicist and GARI-1C principal investigator. “This detector technology offers improved energy resolution, lower power consumption and reduced size compared to similar systems, which is key to developing more advanced

and efficient sensors for detecting threats from orbit.”

[The DoD/DoW Space Test Program \(STP\)](#) was founded in 1966 to provide flight opportunities for all DoD/DoW research and development activities in an economic and efficient manner. Under the U.S. Space Systems Command, STP supports mission design, payload-to-bus integration, space vehicle-to-launch vehicle integration, and on-orbit operations for S&T payloads that exhibit potential military utility. By advancing scientific knowledge and capability, STP is foundational to ensuring continuous STP advantage in the space domain.

“The success of this mission, achieved through a powerful collaboration with the DoW’s Space Test Program, highlights how cutting-edge research and development are fundamental to preserving America’s strategic edge in space,” said USSF Lt. Col. Brian Shimek, system program manager and director for STP.

NRL’s Space Science Division conducts a broad-spectrum of Research, Development, Test & Evaluation in solar-terrestrial physics, astrophysics, upper and middle atmospheric science, and astronomy. The Division’s Military Deputy, Lt. Elijah Ray, is embedded with DoW STP at [Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M.](#), as NRL’s on-site liaison for space experiment coordination and advocacy.

About the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory

NRL is a scientific and engineering command dedicated to research that drives innovative advances for the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps from the seafloor to space and in the information domain. NRL, located in Washington, D.C. with major field sites in Stennis Space Center, Mississippi; Key West, Florida; Monterey, California.

NRL offers several mechanisms for collaborating with the broader scientific community, within and outside of the Federal government. These include Cooperative Research and

Development Agreements (CRADAs), LP-CRADAs, Educational Partnership Agreements, agreements under the authority of 10 USC 4892, licensing agreements, FAR contracts, and other applicable agreements.

U.S. Navy and Royal Danish Navy Conducted Medical Evacuation Near Greenland, Highlighting Arctic Interoperability



NUUK, Greenland (Feb. 21, 2026) – Members of the Royal Danish Navy assigned to the offshore patrol vessel HDMS VAEDDEREN (F 359) embark the Virginia-class fast-attack submarine USS Delaware (SSN 791) in preparation for a personnel transfer. Delaware is operating in the U.S. Naval Forces Northern Command (NAVNORTH) area of operations. NAVNORTH is the maritime component of U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) and is responsible for homeland defense, maritime security, and theater security cooperation in the Arctic and North American maritime approaches. (Courtesy photo)

[By U.S. Northern Command Public Affairs](#), April 6, 2026

PETERSON SFB, Colo.— A recent medical evacuation of a U.S. Navy Sailor off the coast of Greenland demonstrated the importance of international partnerships and readiness in the Arctic.

In late February, while preparing for Ice Camp 2026, a Sailor aboard the Virginia-class fast-attack submarine USS Delaware

(SSN 791) required urgent medical attention. Severe weather conditions prevented evacuation to other locations, prompting the submarine to divert toward Greenland. U.S. naval forces coordinated with the Danish Joint Arctic Command, which dispatched the Royal Danish Navy offshore patrol vessel HDMS Vaedderen (F 359) to assist.

Crews from both nations worked together to transfer the Sailor at sea.

The MEDEVAC occurred as U.S. forces were preparing for Ice Camp 2026, an Arctic operation focused on testing and refining capabilities in the region. These efforts underscore the shared commitment of the U.S. and its allies to Arctic security and regional stability.

U.S. Coast Guard, NOAA partner to restore tsunami warning capability on remote FSM atoll during 29-day Operation Rematau patrol period



The crew of USCGC Oliver Henry (WPC 1140) supports a University of Hawai'i Sea Level Center technician to upgrade a regional NOAA weather monitoring station on Kapingamarangi Atoll, Federated States of Micronesia, on March 20, 2026, in conjunction with supporting a supply delivery. Oliver Henry is the first Fast Response Cutter to make the transit. USCGC Oliver Henry (WPC 1140) returned to Guam on March 29, 2026, closing out a 29-day patrol period that restored a critical tsunami early warning station to a remote Pacific atoll, delivered humanitarian supplies to two island communities, and enforced fisheries laws across more than 4,000 nautical miles. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia, April 6, 2026

SANTA RITA, Guam – The crew of the USCGC Oliver Henry (WPC 1140) returned to Guam on March 29, closing out a 29-day patrol period that restored a critical tsunami early warning station on a remote Pacific atoll, delivered humanitarian supplies to two island communities, and enforced fisheries laws across more than 4,000 nautical miles.

The patrol under Operation Rematau covered U.S. waters in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the Federated States of Micronesia.

“The Coast Guard’s credibility in this part of the Pacific is built one port call, one boarding, one supply delivery at a time. This patrol, from the fisheries enforcement work in FSM’s EEZ to getting that NOAA technician to Kapingamarangi, is exactly how we honor the commitments the United States made to the people in this region. I’m proud of how this team delivered on that responsibility,” said Lt. Ray Cerrato, commanding officer of USCGC Oliver Henry.

The mission’s most consequential stop came at Kapingamarangi Atoll, one of FSM’s most isolated communities. The Oliver Henry crew transported a University of Hawai’i Sea Level Center technician to the atoll to upgrade a regional weather monitoring station, the first such upgrade in 12 years. Supported by the U.S. Embassy in the FSM and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the mission restored the station’s capacity to support tsunami early-warning monitoring across the Western Pacific.

The station’s importance came into sharp focus days after Oliver Henry returned to Guam. On April 2, a magnitude 7.4 earthquake struck in the Molucca Sea, prompting the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center to issue a threat forecast for coastal communities across the Western Pacific, including Guam, the CNMI, Palau, and Yap. The Kapingamarangi gauge was online and transmitting when the event occurred, ready to contribute observed sea level data to the warning center’s analysis.

The earthquake’s distance meant tsunami generation was minimal and not detectable at the Kapingamarangi station, but the network it supports held. The PTWC team confirmed the station is one of a small number of sensors covering that stretch of the Western Pacific and that its restoration directly maintains the readiness network the warning center

depends on.

The crew conducted three fisheries enforcement boardings of foreign-flagged vessels, two Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission inspections on the high seas, and one enhanced bilateral boarding of a vessel under the FSM's jurisdiction in their EEZ, directly advancing accountability under local and international laws in a region where illegal fishing is estimated to cost Pacific nations billions annually.

At Kuttu and Kapingamarangi, the crew delivered 3,000 pounds of humanitarian supplies to residents with limited access to outside goods. The crew also provided Chuuk State Government officials with high-quality imagery documenting the condition of a cargo vessel that grounded on the reef outside of Kuttu Island in the Mortlock Islands in 1998 and has been deteriorating since, supporting local government response efforts.

The patrol expanded the Coast Guard's operational reach for future missions. The crew charted previously unrecorded reefs within Greenwich Pass at Kapingamarangi, establishing a navigable route into the atoll's lagoon for future operations. The Oliver Henry crew also transported Marine Safety Unit Saipan personnel to Tinian and Rota for inspections of port facilities, streamlining logistics, and ensuring the safe flow of goods throughout the CNMI.

During the 395 operational hours underway, the crew improved readiness by qualifying members in roles ranging from underway officer of the deck to engineering officer of the watch while also honoring nautical traditions with one member earning their permanent cutterman designation and six shellback designations during the patrol's equatorial crossing. They also completed nearly two dozen engineering, navigation, and seamanship training drills, and confirmed the cutter's weapons systems remain fully mission-capable during a live-fire

exercise.

Operation Rematau is the U.S. Coast Guard's sustained operational presence across the Freely Associated States of the Pacific, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau. The operation reflects U.S. commitments under the Compacts of Free Association and advances a secure, open, and prosperous Pacific.

Coast Guard Cutter Waesche Seizes Over \$65K in Unreported Pollock Roe in Dutch Harbor



The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Waesche (WMSL 751) seized approximately 5.4 metric tons of unreported pollock roe from the catcher-processor vessel Northern Eagle approximately 17 miles north of Dutch Harbor March 28, 2026. At the request of NOAA Fisheries OLE, Waesche 's boarding team remained with the Northern Eagle as it transited to Dutch Harbor. They observed the offload and documented 11,524 boxes of pollock roe, which was 241 boxes more than the 11,283 declared in the vessel's production report. (U.S. Coast Guard courtesy photo)

From U.S. Coast Guard Arctic District, April 6, 2026

JUNEAU, Alaska – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Waesche (WMSL 751) seized approximately 5.4 metric tons of unreported pollock roe, valued at over \$65,000, after uncovering significant violations of federal fishing regulations aboard the catcher-processor vessel Northern Eagle.

The boarding occurred approximately 15 nautical miles north of

Dutch Harbor on March 26. It was initiated based on reasonable suspicion of a significant Living Marine Resources (LMR) violation, following a pre-boarding audit by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement (OLE), which revealed major discrepancies between the vessel's production reports and electronic logbook.

During the boarding, the Waesche's team obtained the vessel's logs. After further analysis, NOAA Fisheries OLE confirmed that the vessel recorded less catch in its logbook than the vessel's reported production weight. The production weight exceeded its reported catch weight by 1,223 metric tons.

"The integrity of fisheries data is paramount for the sustainability of our nation's living marine resources," said Capt. Tyson Scofield, commanding officer of the Waesche. "This seizure highlights the Coast Guard's commitment to enforcing federal law with our partner agencies to ensure a level playing field for all fishermen who follow the rules. I am extremely proud of the Waesche crew's dedication and perseverance to complete this multi-day operation."

The investigation also uncovered evidence from a previous voyage indicating the underreporting and offload of approximately 12.4 metric tons of pollock roe, valued at an estimated \$150,000.

"As a cooperative enforcement partner, we collaborate closely with the Coast Guard to identify and address suspected and known violations at sea," said Benjamin Cheeseman, assistant director of NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement, Alaska Division. "The Coast Guard's support was key to uncovering these violations on the water where they occurred, and our partnership remains essential to protecting our nation from those who break the law."

At the request of NOAA Fisheries OLE, Waesche 's boarding team

remained with the Northern Eagle as it transited to Dutch Harbor. They observed the offload and documented 11,524 boxes of pollock roe, which was 241 boxes more than the 11,283 declared in the vessel's production report.

Following the discovery, Rear Adm. Bob Little, the Coast Guard Arctic District commander, authorized the seizure of the unreported product. The seized pollock roe has been secured in a cold storage facility in Dutch Harbor.

The Coast Guard will work with NOAA Fisheries OLE for further investigation and potential prosecution.

USS Ashland Completes Ship Wartime Repair and Maintenance in the Philippines



Hull Maintenance Technician 2nd Class Christian Deang, assigned to Southwest Regional Maintenance Center, welds a fan unit bracket aboard Whidbey Island-class dock landing ship USS Ashland (LSD 48) as part of ship wartime repair and maintenance exercise (SWARMEX) in Cebu, Philippines, March 25, 2026. (U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Maliq J. Martin)

From USS Ashland Public Affairs, April 6, 2026

Whidbey Island-class amphibious dock landing ship USS Ashland (LSD 48) completed a ship wartime repair and maintenance exercise (SWARMEX), April 5, as part of its scheduled port visit to Cebu.

These exercises are routinely conducted to maintain readiness and proficiency. This iteration follows Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Pinckney (DDG 91) in Singapore in February 2026, demonstrating Ashland's ability to conduct maintenance and repair while forward deployed and away from homeport.

"This exercise allowed us to work shoulder-to-shoulder with

our Philippine allies to conduct complex repairs while keeping USS Ashland ready to respond to any contingency in the region,” said Cmdr. Adam Peeples, Ashland’s commanding officer. “We cannot thank the Philippines enough for their gracious hospitality, and our visit signifies the unwavering resolve our two nations share in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific.”

SWARMEX consisted of three distinct, concurrent elements: expeditionary repair availability, battle damage assessment and repair table-top exercise, and continuous maintenance availability.

“Our Sailors really came together as a team to meet the challenges of this exercise,” said Peeples. “The skills we learned increase our capability to keep USS Ashland in top material condition and help our forces maintain peace through strength.”

Ashland and embarked Marines from I Marine Expeditionary Force make up Task Force Ashland (TF Ashland), which is conducting routine operations in U.S. 7th Fleet. TF Ashland is a flexible, purpose-built task force that can operate independently or integrate with other naval assets, showcasing a key component of Distributed Maritime Operations (DMO). This model provides combatant commanders with more options to maintain presence and build partner capacity.

U.S. 7th Fleet, the Navy’s largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, routinely interacts and operates with allies and partners in supporting peace, stability, and prosperity and preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

Trump Proposes \$1.5 Trillion Defense Budget



An artist's conception of the proposed Trump-class USS Defiant battleship. *Image credit: White House*

President Trump has proposed a \$1.5 trillion defense budget for fiscal 2027 that would begin funding of the Trump-class battleship, provide \$65.8 billion for shipbuilding, provide a pay raise for the troops and continue funding for the "Golden Dome" missile defense system.

"The Budget builds upon the historic \$1 trillion overall defense topline enacted for 2026 and requests \$1.5 trillion in total budgetary resources for 2027," says a budget outline released April 4. "This is a \$441 billion or 44-percent increase from the 2026 enacted level in combination with the \$151.5 billion in mandatory funding provided through the Working Families Tax Cut Act (WFTCA), Public Law 119-21."

The budget request serves as a road map for Congress to follow, but Congress will ultimately have to approve or

disapprove the various spending levels in the president's budget, many of which will prove controversial, as it also calls for cutting renewable energy, housing and health programs.

Defense Spending

The military shipbuilding budget would include the 18 battle force ships and 16 non-battle force ships and "establishes President Trump's Golden Fleet, including initial funding for the Trump-class battleship and next generation frigates," according to the outline.

It would also "maintain or increase" procurement of Columbia- and Virginia-class submarines and would expand procurement of strategic sealift vessels, hospital ships, tankers, submarine tenders and more.

"The repair capacity of public shipyards would be increased, while improved production across the fleet would help address delays and ensure the timely delivery of vessels," the outline says.

The budget will also call for "unprecedented investments" in unmanned and counter-unmanned systems and "historic investments to aggressively scale its AI [artificial intelligence] ecosystem and ensure broad adoption throughout the armed forces."

It will also call for realigning funding from "aging, legacy platforms" toward spending on "next-generation, cutting-edge capabilities that are necessary to win 21st Century wars," reversing "a longstanding negative trend of under-resourced investment that forces DoW [the Department of War] to retain obsolete military capabilities, the sustainment of which further crowds out procurement of new systems."

To help pay for these new investments, the budget proposes further elimination of spending related to diversity, equity

and inclusion, or DEI, efforts, as well as “effectively disestablishing the department’s ‘climate’ portfolio and eliminating climate-specific funding” for electric vehicles and infrastructure, climate change research, climate-related wargames and simulations, and others.

The heads of the House and Senate Armed Services Committee praised the budget on Friday.

“America is facing the most dangerous global environment since World War II. Growing threats from adversaries such as China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, Islamic radicals, and narco-terrorists require decisive action and renewed urgency to reinvest in our defenses. This bold commitment provides the resources needed to rebuild American military capability and confront those challenges head-on,” Sen. Roger Wicker, (R-Mississippi), and Rep. Mike Rogers, (R-Alabama), said in a joint statement.

Some Democrats were less impressed. Rep. Brendan Doyle, ranking member of the House Budget Committee, said, “the President is now demanding a massive increase in defense spending, including a \$350 billion slush fund for his reckless war with Iran, while cutting billions from health care, education, housing, and more. This budget represents ‘America Last’.”

Congressional hearings on the budget request are expected to begin soon.

HII Redelivers USS New Jersey

from Post-Shakedown Availability



NEWPORT NEWS, Va., April 03, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) – HII’s (NYSE: HII) Newport News Shipbuilding division has completed post-shakedown availability (PSA) work on Virginia-class fast attack submarine USS New Jersey (SSN 796). The submarine was redelivered to the U.S. Navy Friday.

“Maintaining our nation’s undersea maritime supremacy is strengthened by the redelivery of USS New Jersey,” said Jason Ward, NNS vice president of new construction submarine programs. “Our combined NNS-Navy team is focused on the mission and understands the importance of getting this submarine to the fleet.”

The PSA, a maintenance period that typically follows delivery of new ships, included combat systems and electronics upgrades, as well as general maintenance on the submarine.

Norfolk Naval Shipyard Undocks USS John Warner



Norfolk Naval Shipyard (NNSY) successfully undocked USS John Warner (SSN 785) last month, meeting a major milestone in the Virginia-class submarine's Extended Drydocking Selected Restricted Availability (EDSRA). (Photo by Daniel DeAngelis)
From Michael D Brayshaw, Norfolk Naval Shipyard, April 2, 2026

Norfolk Naval Shipyard (NNSY) successfully undocked USS John Warner (SSN 785) last month, meeting a major milestone in the Virginia-class submarine's Extended Drydocking Selected Restricted Availability (EDSRA).

During an EDSRA, the submarine is drydocked to undergo hull, propulsion system, and modernization upgrades, allowing the

submarine to remain fully operational for its planned service life. Virginia-class submarines are critical vessels in maintaining national security given their operational versatility and nuclear-powered fast attack capability.

John Warner has been a pivotal availability for the Navy as the first Virginia class Block III drydocking at any of the nation's four public shipyards. Block III refers to the redesigned submarines procured during the third Virginia-class acquisition contract.

NNSY's preparations for John Warner involved extensive teaming and knowledge sharing with Portsmouth Naval Shipyard and Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility, having previously executed Virginia-class CNO availabilities.

"NNSY's commitment to learn and reach out for knowledge from the other shipyards for critical work evolutions has been a major key to the success of the project," said Charles Brock, NNSY Submarine Program Manager. "The Virginia-class shipyard community is a very close-knit group that leans in to help one another. Because this is the first Block III EDSRA for the corporation there were many opportunities where NNSY was able to share lessons learned with the other shipyards to help them as well. Additionally, the team's drive to work all possible solutions and then execute the best one was critical."

In a demonstration of the shipyard's ability to adapt and overcome first-time challenges, John Warner undocked with the crew able to move back aboard, mast and periscope installation completed, and command and control system testing started, a trifecta feat not accomplished on a submarine availability at NNSY since 2001.

"The powerful collaboration between our crew and the shipyard delivered the most materially ready submarine I've undocked," said Cmdr. Nicholas Tuuk, John Warner commanding officer.

“This achievement allows us to now fully focus on forging a crew of master submariners, ready to execute any mission when we return to the fleet.”

Undocking with more than 95 percent of the production work complete, remaining availability work will focus on testing and crew readiness to support critical operations and sea trials.

NNSY established a Submarine Maintenance Operations Center (SMOC) Detachment in 2025 to provide timely depot-maintenance submarine deliveries back to the fleet. The SMOC assists project teams including John Warner’s in resolving issues such as material and resource needs, work package modifications, and technical adjudication. By aligning resources with readiness priorities, the Navy is able to provide more available ships and submarines to defend US interests globally and support critical operations.

“Clearly identifying the project’s needs and expecting a reciprocal response and commitment has been one of the key elements to the success of John Warner,” said Brock. “It has kept the team and all support aligned to what was needed and when it was needed. Additionally, the team employed a process of setting aggressive goals with specific dates to steer the shipyard in the direction needed to complete these major key events.”

“It’s a great win for our shipyard and Navy taking such a huge step toward delivering a Virginia-class submarine back to the fleet and ready to meet the mission,” said Rear Adm. Kavon Hakimzadeh, shipyard commander. “I thank everyone for their efforts so far and we now rally around John Warner to urgently complete all remaining work as a committed team to return this critical asset supporting our nation’s warfighting readiness.”

Commissioned on Aug. 1, 2015, John Warner is the 12th

Virginia-class attack submarine and the first ship bearing the name of Senator John Warner who served the Commonwealth of Virginia for three decades until his retirement in 2009. Warner also served as Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee from 1999 to 2001, and again from 2003 to 2007.

As one of the largest, most historic and multifaceted shipyards in the nation, Norfolk Naval Shipyard's mission is to repair, modernize and inactivate Navy warships and training platforms to maximize readiness and availability for fleet tasking.

Former Sen. Sam Nunn Visits Ingalls Shipbuilding for Update on His Namesake Destroyer



From HII

PASCAGOULA, Miss., April 03, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) – HII’s (NYSE: HII) Ingalls Shipbuilding division recently welcomed former U.S. Sen. Sam Nunn, his wife, Colleen Nunn, and their daughter and ship sponsor Michelle Nunn, for a visit to the shipyard. The visit included a construction update and tour of the future USS Sam Nunn (DDG 133), a Flight III Arleigh Burke-class destroyer named in honor of the senator, and marked their return to Ingalls following the ship’s [keel authentication](#) ceremony.

“It was an honor to welcome Sen. Nunn and Michelle Nunn to Ingalls to see first-hand the progress taking place on DDG 133 and to highlight the ship’s advancing construction path toward launch,” Ingalls Shipbuilding President Brian Blanchette said. “Our shipbuilders take tremendous pride in building a ship that will carry Sen. Nunn’s name and his legacy of enduring commitment to national defense.”

During the 24 years of service in the U.S. Senate, Nunn became one of the nation’s most influential voices on defense policy.

He spearheaded major initiatives including Department of Defense Reorganization Act and the NunnLugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, which led to the deactivation of more than 7,600 nuclear warheads from former Soviet Union republics. The future USS Sam Nunn honors this legacy of strengthening America's defense and advancing global security.

Nunn expressed appreciation for the shipbuilders working to bring DDG 133 to life. "It is exciting and deeply humbling to see this powerful destroyer taking shape and to witness the exceptional craftsmanship of the Ingalls team," Nunn said. "I am grateful for the vital role Ingalls plays in ensuring our nation's strength and readiness."

Future USS Sam Nunn (DDG 133) is the fifth Flight III Arleigh Burke-class destroyer to be built at Ingalls. Flight III destroyers incorporate substantial design and system upgrades including the AN/SPY 6(V)1 Air and Missile Defense Radar and the Aegis Baseline 10 Combat System that significantly enhance the U.S. Navy's integrated air and missile defense capabilities and ensure readiness against evolving threats well into the 21st century.

To date, Ingalls Shipbuilding has delivered 36 Arleigh Burke-class destroyers to the U.S. Navy, including the first Flight III, [USS Jack H. Lucas](#) (DDG 125) and [Ted Stevens](#) (DDG 128). The four Flight III destroyers currently under construction include: [Jeremiah Denton](#) (DDG 129), [George M. Neal](#) (DDG 131), [Sam Nunn](#) (DDG 133), and [Thad Cochran](#) (DDG 135). Additionally, Ingalls is in early pre-planning and material procurement phases for John F. Lehman (DDG 137), Telesforo Trinidad (DDG 139), Ernest E. Evans (DDG 141), Charles French (DDG 142), Richard J. Danzig (DDG 143), Intrepid (DDG 145) and Robert Kerrey (DDG 146).

HII's Ingalls Shipbuilding Launches Guided Missile Destroyer George M. Neal



From HII, April 1, 2026

PASCAGOULA, Miss., April 01, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) – HII's (NYSE: HII) Ingalls Shipbuilding division successfully launched future USS *George M. Neal* (DDG 131) today, marking a major construction milestone for the fourth Flight III *Arleigh Burke*-class destroyer to be built at the shipyard.

In the weeks leading up to launch, shipbuilders completed key construction work, secured major components and performed inspections to ensure the ship was ready to enter the water. The ship was then translated from land into the dry dock, where teams conducted final checks before flooding the dock

and allowing the destroyer to float for the first time.

“Launching DDG 131 is a direct reflection of the hard work and dedication of our Ingalls shipbuilders,” said Chris Brown, Ingalls Shipbuilding DDG 51 program manager. “Seeing the ship reach the water for the first time is a proud moment for everyone involved and a real testament to the people who make this work possible for our U.S. Navy.”

DDG 131 is named for George M. Neal, a Korean War veteran and an aviation machinist’s mate third class who was awarded the Navy Cross for his heroic actions while attempting to rescue a fellow service member under enemy fire.

As a Flight III *Arleigh Burke*-class destroyer, DDG 131 represents the next generation of surface combatants for the U.S. Navy, featuring the Flight III AN/SPY-6 (V)1 radar system and the Aegis Baseline 10 combat system, designed to counter threats well into the 21st century.

Following today’s launch, *George M. Neal* will move into the next phase of construction, which includes outfitting, systems activation and testing in preparation for sea trials.

For more information about the *Arleigh Burke*-class guided missile destroyer program at HII, visit: <https://hii.com/what-we-do/capabilities/guided-missile-destroyers/>.