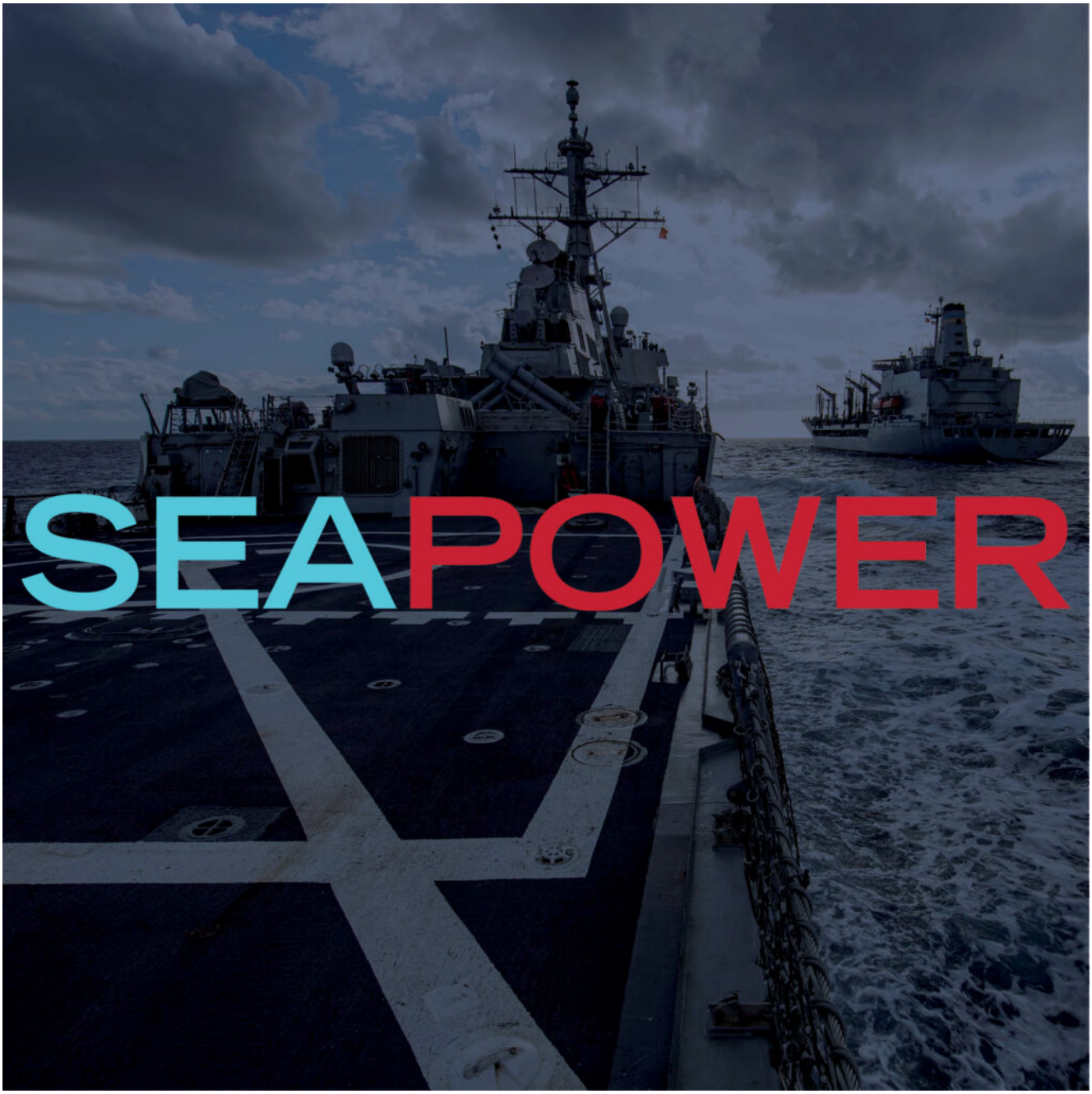
U.S. Navy to Christen Future USNS Lansing



From the U.S. Department of War, Jan. 9, 2026

The U.S. Navy will christen the future USNS Lansing (EPF 16) during a ceremony at Austal USA in Mobile, Alabama, Jan. 10 at 10:30 a.m. (CDT).

The principal address will be delivered by The Honorable Hung Cao, Under Secretary of the Navy. Additional speakers will

include Vice Adm. Seiko Okano, principal military deputy to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition; Rear Adm. Benjamin Nicholson, commander, Military Sealift Command; Ms. Michelle Kruger, president of Austal USA; and Mr. Scott Bonk, director of Future Combatants and Mission Systems, General Dynamics Mission Systems.

“As we christen the future USNS Lansing, we celebrate another symbol of the unbreakable linkage that ties the workmanship of our shipyard workers to those of our American mariners who will man these ships. This also marks the pivotal transition from construction to the rigorous test and trials phase to ensure these platforms are ready to answer the call,” said Under Secretary of the Navy Hung Cao.

In a time-honored tradition, the ship’s sponsors, the Honorable Gretchen Whitmer, Governor of Michigan, and the Honorable Lisa McClain, U.S. Representative, Michigan’s 9th District, will christen the ship by breaking a bottle of sparkling wine across the bow.

“The future USNS Lansing is one step closer to joining the U.S. fleet and Military Sealift Command to answer the call to action, any ocean, any time,” said Cao.

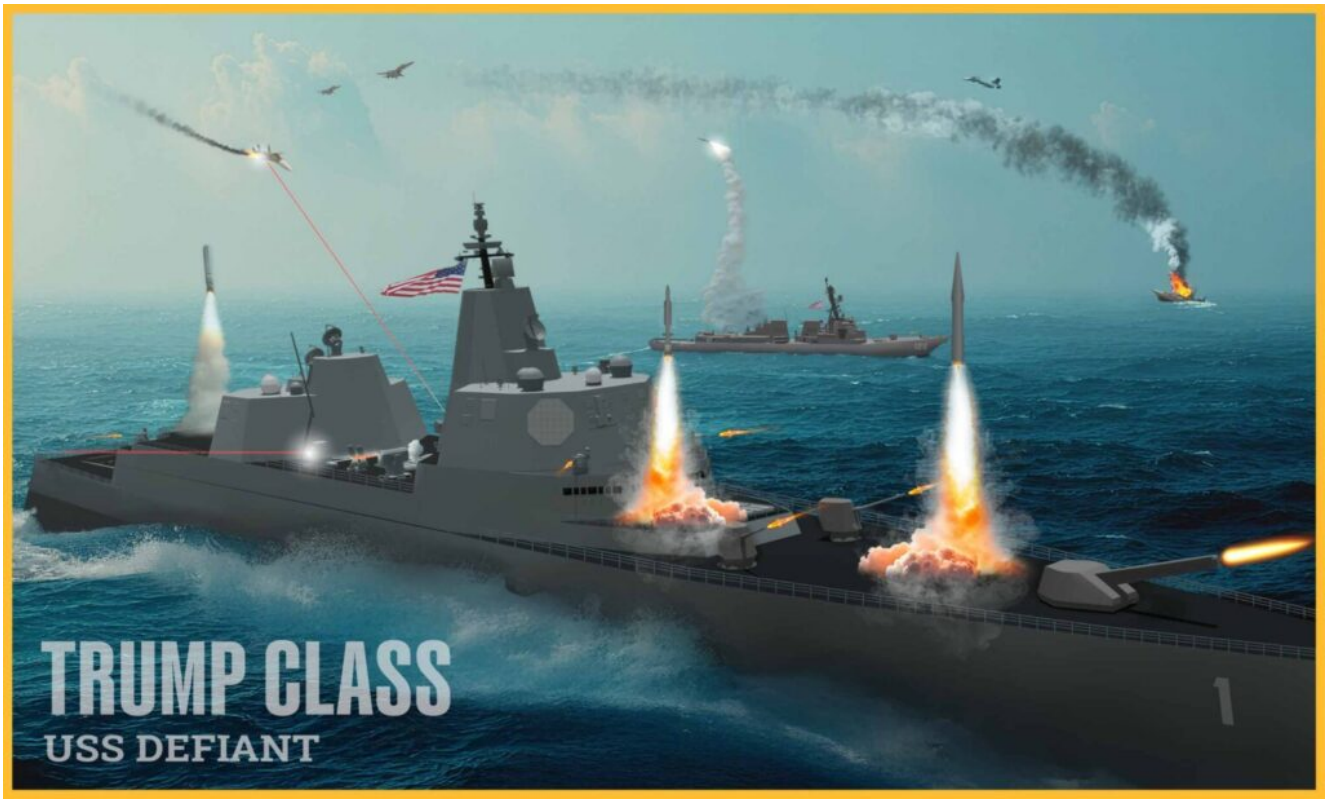
The ship is named in honor of Michigan’s capital city Lansing. USNS Lansing is the first ship to be named after the city, a manufacturing hub that has produced supplies for our nation’s military since the Civil War.

The christening of the future USNS Lansing symbolizes the Navy’s 250-year commitment to innovation and maritime dominance. From seabed to space, the Navy delivers power for peace – always ready to fight and win. This milestone marks the Navy’s enduring legacy and commitment to shaping the future of maritime power.

EPF 16, as the final “Flight II” ship of the Spearhead class, will be able to deploy as an expeditionary fast transport, as

a Role 2 medical-capable platform, or as a combination of both. The ship is currently designated to be crewed by 31 civilian mariners and is capable of embarking up to 155 embarked forces, or an Expeditionary Medical Unit as required.

HII Works to Boost Capacity as New Ship Designs Loom



An artist's conception of a new Navy battleship, as released by the U.S. Navy in December. *Image credit: U.S. Navy*

ARLINGTON, VA – Shipbuilder HII is concentrating on improving its shipbuilding capacity and efficiency to meet the demands of the military and the Trump Administration, efforts that now are expected to include building a new class of battleships.

Chris Kastner, president and CEO of HII, sat down with

reporters in the company's Arlington, Virginia office ahead of next week's Surface Navy Association meeting and said the company is in tune with the administration and is focused on increasing its capacity and bolstering its workforce to speed ship production.

"It's a good and challenging time to be in shipbuilding," Kastner said.

Some of those challenges have arisen very recently. Just before Christmas, Trump announced a new class of battleship as part of the "Golden Fleet" concept to revitalize American shipbuilding, which would mark the first battleship construction since World War II.

This week, Trump said he wants defense spending to climb to $1.5 trillion, a 50% increase over the current budget, including spending from last year's budget reconciliation bill. He also said defense companies should focus on performance instead of conducting stock buybacks or paying large salaries to executives.

Kastner said while much is yet unknown about the battleship – "we learned of the battleship announcement when you did" – he expects more information in the next month or two and said it won't interfere with plans for a Navy package buy of two aircraft carriers as "it's clear the Navy wants both, they're both part of the Golden Fleet."

The Navy has so far projected the battleship will be up to 800 feet long, have a crew of up to 850 and consist of 20 to 25 ships, each equipped with vertical launch missile cells, two Mk45 five-inch guns, one 32-megajoule railguns, Spy-6 radars and more.

Kastner said the speed of design and construction depends on whether it's a clean-sheet system or one based on a parent ship, such as Arleigh Burke-class DDG-51 destroyers or the follow-on DDG(X) concept.

“If it’s fundamentally based on a derivative of a DDG expanded and they can use the DDG(X) concept studies as a baseline, you can accelerate things,” he said. “It’s all going to be based on the requirements, and how many of those requirements are consistent with a previous ship’s requirements, and whether you can use similar design parameters.”

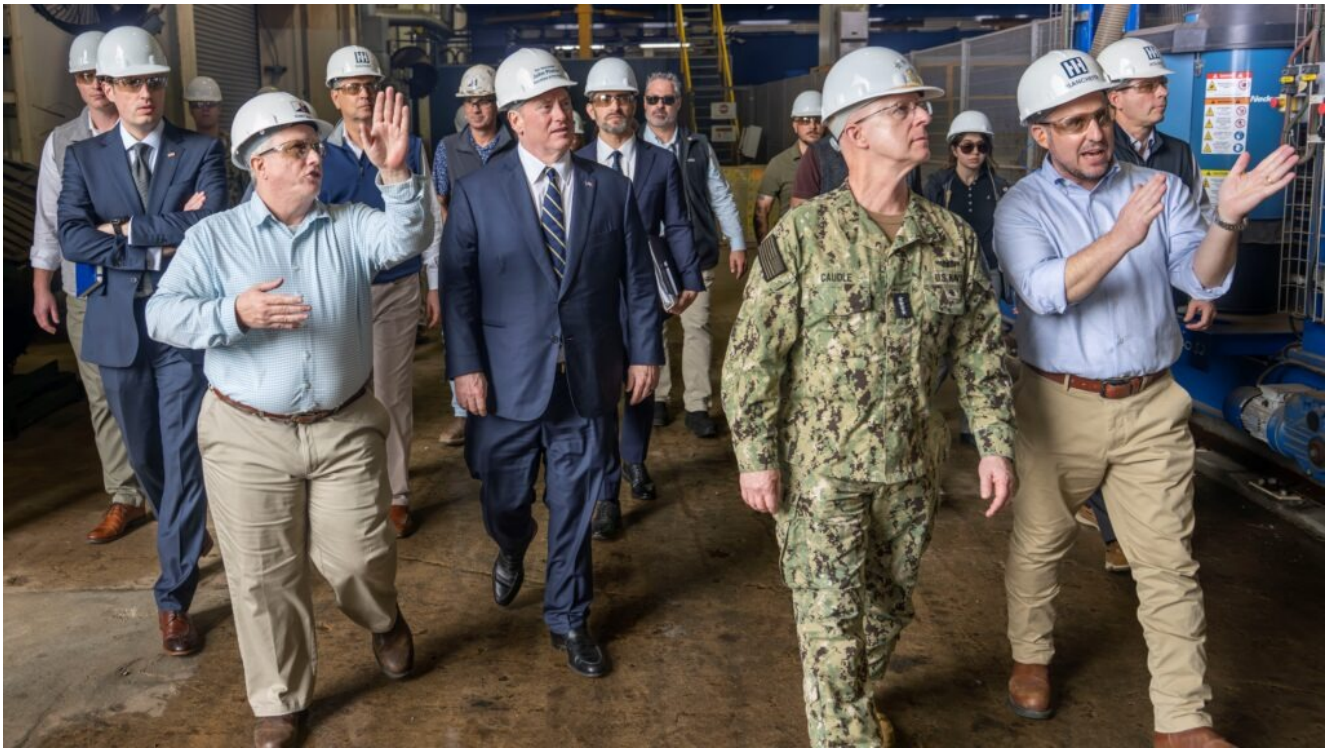
Navy shipbuilding plans also include a yet-undefined new type of aircraft carrier as well as a new frigate based on HII’s Legend-class national security cutter, which Secretary of the Navy John Phelan described as “a proven, American-built ship that has been protecting U.S. interest at home and abroad … our goal is clear – launch the first hull in the water in 2028.”

Kastner said the carrier design is likely a “potential redesign of the Ford class” and said the goal date of 2028 for the new frigate is achievable because it’s based on the existing design. The Navy’s previous frigate program, based on an Italian ship design, was truncated to just two vessels after the program experienced schedule delays, cost overruns and design changes.

I have high confidence we can get that in the water in 2028,” he said. “When I say in the water, that means launched by 2028.” As for performing to meet White House and Department of Defense standards, Kastner said, “the theme is invest more, invest more for capacity and capability and technology, and if you do that and execute, you have opportunity for growth.”

HII Hosts Secretary of The

Navy and Top Naval Leaders at Ingalls Shipbuilding



PASCAGOULA, Miss., Jan. 07, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) — HII (NYSE: HII) hosted John Phelan, secretary of the Navy, along with Adm. Daryl Caudle, chief of naval operations, and Gen. Eric Smith, commandant of the Marine Corps, at its Ingalls Shipbuilding division Wednesday. The senior leaders toured the shipyard, gained insights into HII's workforce initiatives and discussed Ingalls' role in delivering the U.S. Navy's "Golden Fleet" of advanced surface combatants.

"Ingalls Shipbuilding represents the ingenuity and commitment required to meet the Navy's current and future needs. The shipbuilders I met today are on the front lines of American strength — men and women whose hard work protects our national security, underwrites our liberty, and sustains the way of life we are sworn to defend. There is no maritime dominance without their skill, innovation, and relentless commitment to excellence," said John C. Phelan, 79th secretary of the Navy.

“We want to thank Secretary Phelan and Department of Navy leadership for visiting with our shipbuilders who are proud to support America’s efforts to maintain maritime supremacy,” said Chris Kastner, HII’s president and CEO. “Across our shipyards we recognize the U.S. Navy’s urgent need for ships. HII has worked diligently in partnership with our customer to expand our capacity to deliver on this increased and urgent demand, by investing in our yards, establishing partnerships, increasing our hiring retention, and increasing shipbuilder proficiency to support performance.”

Ingalls Shipbuilding is actively supporting early engineering and design discussions for the Navy’s next battleship, which is part of the broader “Golden Fleet” effort to modernize and leverage state-of-the-art capabilities. Concurrently, Ingalls Shipbuilding was selected to design and construct the Navy’s future small surface combatant (SSC) platform, leveraging the proven design of the *Legend*-class national security cutter.

The decisive combat power our Navy needs doesn’t start at sea — it starts right here, on the deck plates, with the welders, engineers, planners, and tradesmen who show up every day to build America’s Navy,” Caudle said. “What shipbuilders do matters and our Sailors depend on it. We’re working with shipyard leaders and industry partners to bring the President’s vision for our Golden Fleet to life and what it will take to make that vision real.”

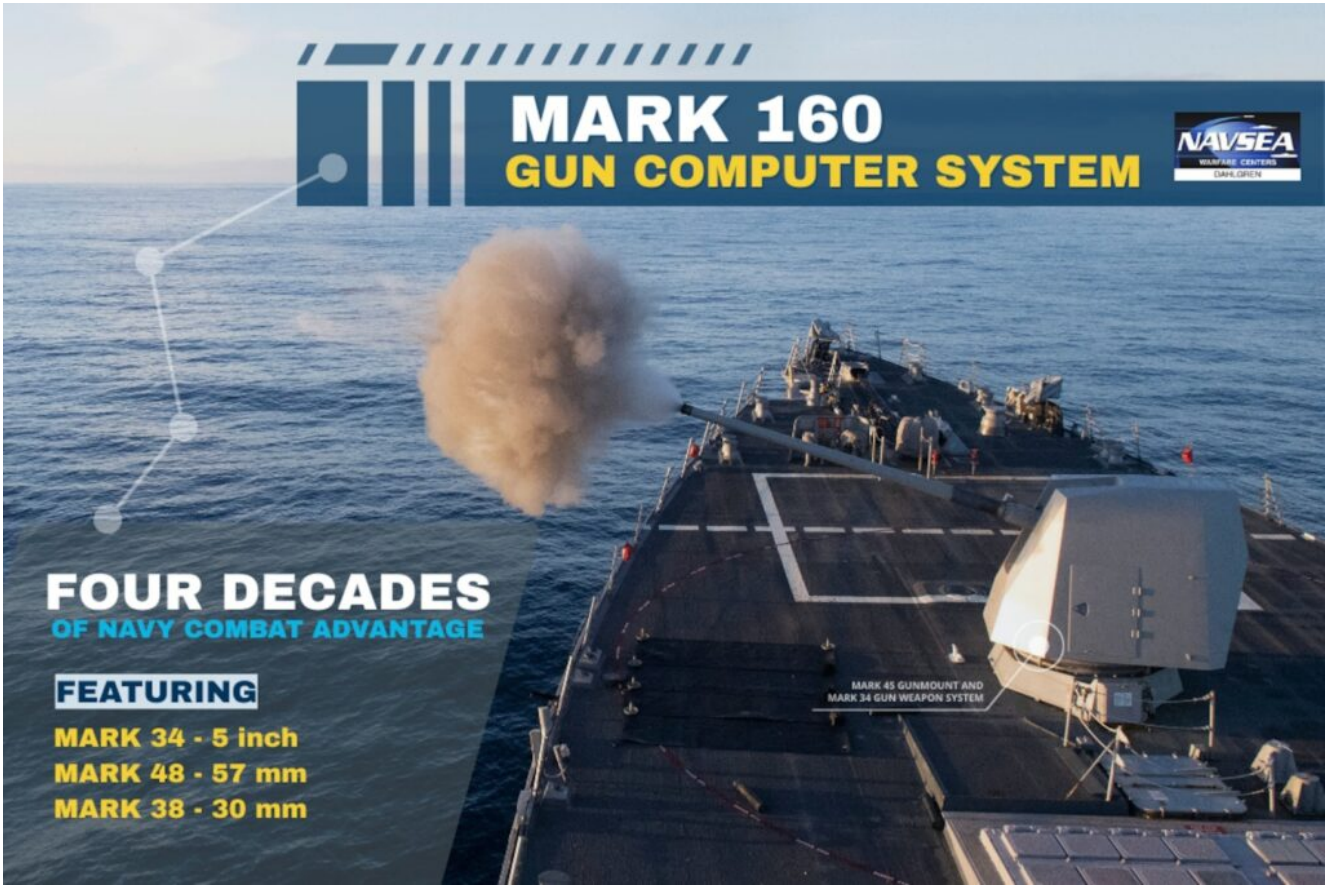
During the visit, Phelan, Caudle and Smith met with HII and Ingalls leadership to discuss current shipbuilding programs and observed the advanced manufacturing technologies that are being utilized in the shipyard to increase shipbuilding throughput. The leaders also spent time aboard *America*-class amphibious assault ship *Bougainville* (LHA 8), currently under construction, and the recently delivered *Arleigh Burke*-class destroyer Ted Stevens (DDG 128).

The Navy and Marine Corps visit highlighted HII’s commitment to aligning its engineering expertise, manufacturing capabilities, and workforce proficiency with the Navy’s long-term operational needs.

“The work being done here is vital to our national interest,” Smith said. “These workers should be proud to know they are directly contributing to America’s Naval Expeditionary Force. These ships will project American power across the globe, with Marines aboard ready to respond to any crisis or conflict.”

HII has invested more than $1 billion in infrastructure, facilities, and advanced toolsets at Ingalls Shipbuilding to prepare for the delivery of next-generation capabilities. These investments have enhanced every facet of production, ensuring the shipyard is ready to meet the demands of upcoming programs such as the battleship class and SSC, while continuing to deliver destroyers and amphibious assault ships.

The Enduring Power of Mark 160: Four Decades of Navy Combat Advantage



By Dorina Watermolen, NSWCDD Corporate Communications, Jan. 8, 2026

DAHLGREN, Va. – The Mark 160 gun computer system is built for quick adaptation and ongoing innovation. Owned and sustained by the government and built at Naval Surface Warfare Center Dahlgren Division, it is a 40-year product line that provides America's fleet with precision.

"Mark 160 is the fire control system for our Navy's main gun weapon systems: The Mark 34 (5-inch), Mark 48 (57mm) and Mark 38 (30mm)," said Rachel Van Buren, the program's deputy manager.

The fire control system is a key component of the Mark 34 gun weapon system used on Aegis-class destroyers and other warships, responsible for calculating ballistic solutions and firing commands based on sensor data and selected ammunition. It interfaces with shipboard sensors, receives target information and generates the precise gun train and elevation orders needed to accurately fire the gun.

Government owned from the start

Unlike many major combat systems developed by contractors, the Mark 160's software is wholly government owned.

"We control the design, upgrades and sustainment," said Van Buren. "There's no dependency on proprietary code or outside timelines."

When the fleet requires a capability or new threats emerge, NSWCDD can make informed decisions and deliver improvements quickly and efficiently.

This ownership also streamlines technical integration. While the hardware for guns and optical sensors comes from various vendors, the NSWCDD Mark 160 team develops the fire control system in-house, calculating complex solutions.

Mark 160 acts as the shipboard brain for gun weapon systems, translating sensor data into precise gunfire.

"It takes all the available sensor input – radar, optical tracking and more – and generates a fire control solution so that, when a threat comes in, our guns engage accurately," said Van Buren.

For each engagement, Mark 160 receives target tracks from combat systems like Aegis, then calibrates for variables such as ship movement, environmental conditions and the ballistic specifics of each type of gun and ammunition, including modern guided projectiles.

The system constantly evolves, incorporating new sensors and effectors, helping ships adapt to the fast-changing dynamics in hostile regions like the Red Sea, where the gun weapon systems have been effective against threats.

"Our recent work with hypervelocity projectile integration really shows the team's capability. It took less than six months to move from requirements to ship integration –

something that’s possible because the government owns the code and oversees priorities.”

Fast, fleet-focused evolution

The team embraces Agile software development, keeping the Mark 160 relevant.

Waterfall and Agile are two distinct software development methodologies. Waterfall follows a structured, step-by-step process in which each phase – such as planning, design and testing – is completed before moving to the next. Agile, on the other hand, is iterative and flexible. It allows for continuous testing, regular customer feedback and easy adjustments to evolving needs.

“We switched from the Waterfall system to Agile about four years ago,” said Van Buren. “Now, instead of waiting five years for new capabilities, we are doing incremental releases. We push out updates every quarter, test them with real hardware in our labs and, if they are successful, deliver them rapidly to the fleet.”

This iterative approach empowers the Mark 160 team to innovate quickly based on fleet feedback.

“If something’s not working, we adjust,” said Van Buren. “We’re constantly improving both our product and the way we work.”

One of the latest advances focuses on making the operator’s job easier amid the chaos of combat. Previously, each gun impact was shown individually on displays, which could overwhelm the operator with data.

Because shipboard radars are highly sensitive, the detonation or impact of a 5-inch projectile near a target generates radar clutter. Splash-avoidance processing is designed to minimize clutter’s effect on the target’s tracking, resulting in

more accurate 5-inch gunfire.

Supporting the fleet and partners worldwide

The Mark 160 isn't limited to U.S. Navy ships.

"We're on guided-missile destroyers and cruisers and even Coast Guard platforms, with a substantial number of foreign military sales," said the deputy program manager.

Allies like Australia, South Korea and Japan leverage the Mark 160 for their gun weapon systems and more countries are expressing interest each year.

Through ongoing integration with new weapon systems and munitions, such as guided projectiles, Mark 160 provides the combat edge necessary for modern naval warfare.

"It's our flexibility – being the avenue for new capabilities to reach the fleet, whether it's kinetic or even AI-powered optical tracking – that keeps the Navy at the forefront," said Van Buren. "The fact that we, as the government, own and control the evolution is fundamental to maintaining our strategic advantage."

With its legacy of adaptability, fleet-focused improvement and global reach, the Mark 160 is poised to anchor naval gunfire solutions for decades more – ensuring that the U.S. and its partners remain ready, adaptable and lethal where and when it matters most.

Naval Research Lab Sharpens

Navy’s Sights with a Domain-Centric Path for Smarter Sensing

The U.S. Naval Research Laboratory (NRL) launched a groundbreaking remote sensing experiment, Coastal Hyperspectral Reflectance Object Material Analysis (CHROMA), Sept. 4-19, 2025, designed to accelerate the application of artificial intelligence (AI) in hyperspectral imaging and strengthen environmental intelligence and resource management capabilities across the Department of War and the wider scientific community. CHROMA participants are seen in a thermal infrared image during the second week of the Rochester Institute of Technology’s (RIT) Open Community eXperiment (ROCX). (Photo by Nathan Stein of Matter Intelligence)

From Nicholas E. M. Pasquini, U.S. Naval Research Laboratory Corporate Communications

Jan. 7, 2026

The U.S. Naval Research Laboratory (NRL) launched a remote sensing experiment to sharpen artificial intelligence (AI) applications in hyperspectral imaging across the Department of

the Navy and broader scientific community.

The U.S. Naval Research Laboratory (NRL) launched a remote sensing experiment to sharpen artificial intelligence (AI) applications in hyperspectral imaging across the Department of the Navy and broader scientific community.

Hyperspectral imaging, often described as capturing “the color of color,” provides a unique spectral fingerprint for each pixel. Combined with AI, these fingerprints support powerful tools for detecting subtle material differences and observing environmental change.

In coastal and aquatic environments, such AI tools could help identify hazardous materials, monitor infrastructure degradation, and assess natural resources with unprecedented accuracy.

The initiative, known as the Coastal Hyperspectral Reflectance Object Material Analysis (CHROMA) experiment, ran Sept. 4–19 as part of the Rochester Institute of Technology’s (RIT) Open Community eXperiment (ROCX).

“NRL was a key partner in the success of ROCX,” said RIT Research Professor John Kerekes, Ph.D. “The variety of material deployments on water and land enriched the overall value of the experiment and the professionalism of their staff was a great example for participating students and collaborators.”

Led by Kerekes, the multi-agency effort brought together federal, academic, and industry partners to collect detailed imaging data and match it with real-world measurements taken on the ground.

“The Navy has always depended on its ability to sense, interpret, and respond to the environment,” said NRL’s Information Operations Branch Head Gautam Trivedi, Ph.D. “With CHROMA, we’re building the foundation for the next generation

of environmental intelligence, where AI and advanced sensing work hand-in-hand."

The laboratory is leveraging multi-scale data collected from airborne platforms, unmanned aerial vehicles, and satellites over engineered and natural targets at the Tait Preserve in Penfield, New York – an environment chosen for its coastal and aquatic-adjacent features.

"This experiment moves hyperspectral technology out of the lab and into a realistic operational setting," said NRL Information Technology Division Superintendent Joey Mathews. "It represents a critical step in elevating the Technology Readiness Level of AI-enhanced sensing applications, moving us toward demonstrations that directly support naval missions."

A Multi-Platform, Domain-Centric Approach The NRL team synchronized flights and different types of sensors to capture observations at nearly the same time. This approach ensures data from satellites, airplanes, drones, and ground sensors can be accurately compared, offering researchers a richer dataset to build better AI. CHROMA's design centers on generating detailed, multi-modal datasets of known material spectral responses. Researchers collected measurements from custom-fabricated metal panels with painted coatings, as well as from natural rock and mineral samples. These targets serve as known reference points – like the bullseye on a target – for improving AI algorithms that solve a longstanding remote sensing challenge called hyperspectral unmixing. Hyperspectral unmixing is the process of separating mixed spectral signatures within a single pixel. When unresolved, mixed pixels can obscure object detection and reduce identification accuracy – especially in complex, cluttered coastal environments. "We are enhancing the efficacy of AI-driven approaches in resolving sub-pixel material compositions," said NRL CHROMA Project Lead Katarina Doctor, Ph.D. "By methodically changing the targets and viewing them with different sensors, we can learn how an object's signature

changes based on its material, the weather, and the type of sensor used to view it.” Doctor emphasized the data’s direct application to naval missions, stating it will significantly improve our ability to detect and identify objects in crowded littoral zones. She

noted that this improved hyperspectral detection is key to assessing threats, monitoring critical infrastructure, and ensuring the U.S. Navy can maintain a clear operational advantage in any coastal environment.

Elevating Naval Survivability The NRL Signature Technology Office contributed coated panels for the experiment, supporting research on how artificial surfaces appear in natural maritime settings. “This project, enhanced by Doctor’s work with advanced AI, uses the collected data to develop more effective camouflage coatings that will make naval platforms harder to detect by advanced surveillance systems,” said Scott Ramsey, Head of the NRL Signature Technology Office. “This research is key to improving naval asset survivability by making them harder to spot against natural backgrounds.” The resulting AI systems will be better able to distinguish between natural environments, like ocean surface, and coated, fabricated objects, like a ship’s hull. The approach provides reference points for evaluating how AI-based unmixing performs across varying environmental and spectral conditions.

Data for the Global Research Community

Doctor said ROCX will produce comprehensive hyperspectral datasets, encompassing engineered surfaces, geological samples, and a range of environmental conditions. The dataset will be shared openly with the remote sensing community, supporting defense and civilian research in coastal resource management, environmental intelligence, and infrastructure monitoring. ROCX’s multi-platform framework ensures experiment data is broadly applicable and scientifically rigorous. The combined dataset also enables researchers to study how an

object’s spectral signature is affected by its material properties, the atmosphere, and other environmental factors. “The integration of diverse data types is what makes CHROMA unique,” Mathews said. “It’s not just about building better algorithms – it’s about understanding how they perform in the complexity of the real world.”

AI’s Domain-Centric Future

CHROMA also reflects a shift in AI development from traditional, model-centric approaches toward what researchers call Domain-Centric AI. This approach embeds expert scientific knowledge into the AI development process from the start, ensuring the final system understands the real-world context of its mission, which makes the AI more reliable.

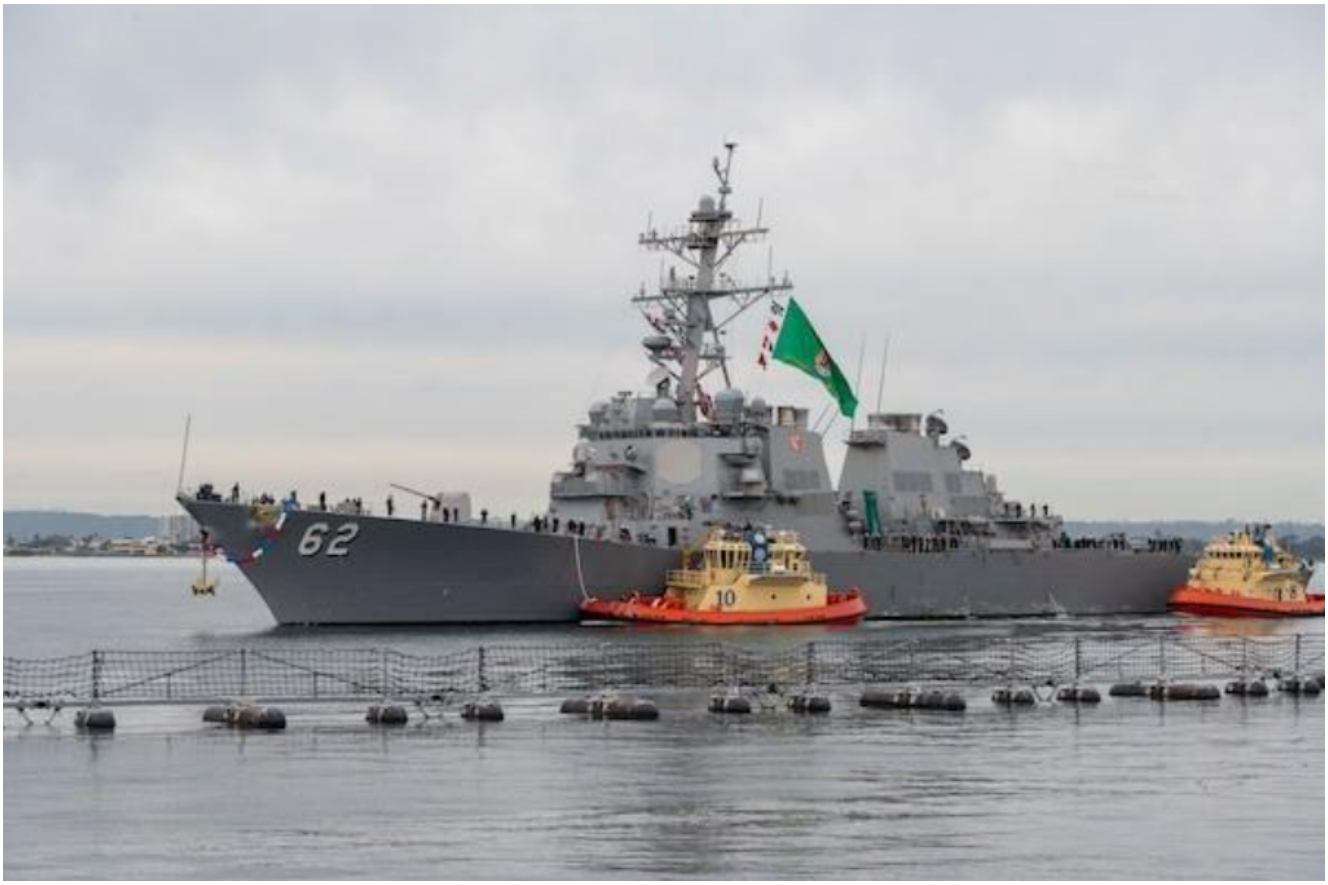
“This paradigm addresses the ‘why’ behind the data. Real-world applicability and trustworthiness depend heavily on understanding the problem’s context and leveraging specialized human expertise,” Doctor said. “The ROCX experiment is a prime example of Domain-Centric AI. We are not just gathering raw information – we are creating a dataset informed by deep understanding of the target materials, their environment, and the sensors collecting them – which makes the resulting AI models more effective.”

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, and employs approximately 3,000 civilian scientists, engineers and support personnel. 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. For more information, contact NRL Corporate Communications at NRLPAO@us.navy.mil.

USS Fitzgerald Returns to San Diego Following Seven-Month Underway



The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) returns to its homeport of Naval Base San Diego following operations in the U.S. 3rd, 5th and 7th Fleets, Jan. 6, 2025 (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Lordin Kelly)
From U.S. 3rd Fleet Public Affairs, Jan. 6 2026

Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) returned to its homeport of Naval Base San Diego following a seven-month underway to the U.S. 3rd, 5th, and 7th Fleet areas of operation, Jan. 6, 2026.

While underway, Fitzgerald conducted a wide range of operations, including routine presence patrols and maritime security operations.

The ship participated in several multinational exercises, enhancing interoperability and strengthening partnerships with key allies, including the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force and the Republic of Korea Navy.

Fitzgerald executed six transits of the Strait of Hormuz, ensuring freedom of navigation in the Arabian Gulf, and participated in major multinational exercises including MALABAR 2025 and SWARMEX 2025, enhancing interoperability and strengthened partnerships with the navies of Australia, Bangladesh, Germany, India, Japan, Pakistan, the Philippines, and the United Arab Emirates, all contributing to a free and open Indo-Pacific.

As a lethal, agile force, the Sailors aboard Fitzgerald exemplified the warrior ethos and readiness required to defend the United States and its interests at a moment’s notice.

“I am truly proud of the hard work and dedication this crew has displayed daily throughout this seven month deployment,” said Cmdr. Paul F. Richardson III, commanding officer of Fitzgerald. “Their resilience and professionalism enabled us to successfully execute every mission we were tasked with in multiple areas of operation. We are all excited to be home and reunited with our families and loved ones, whose unwavering support made this possible.”

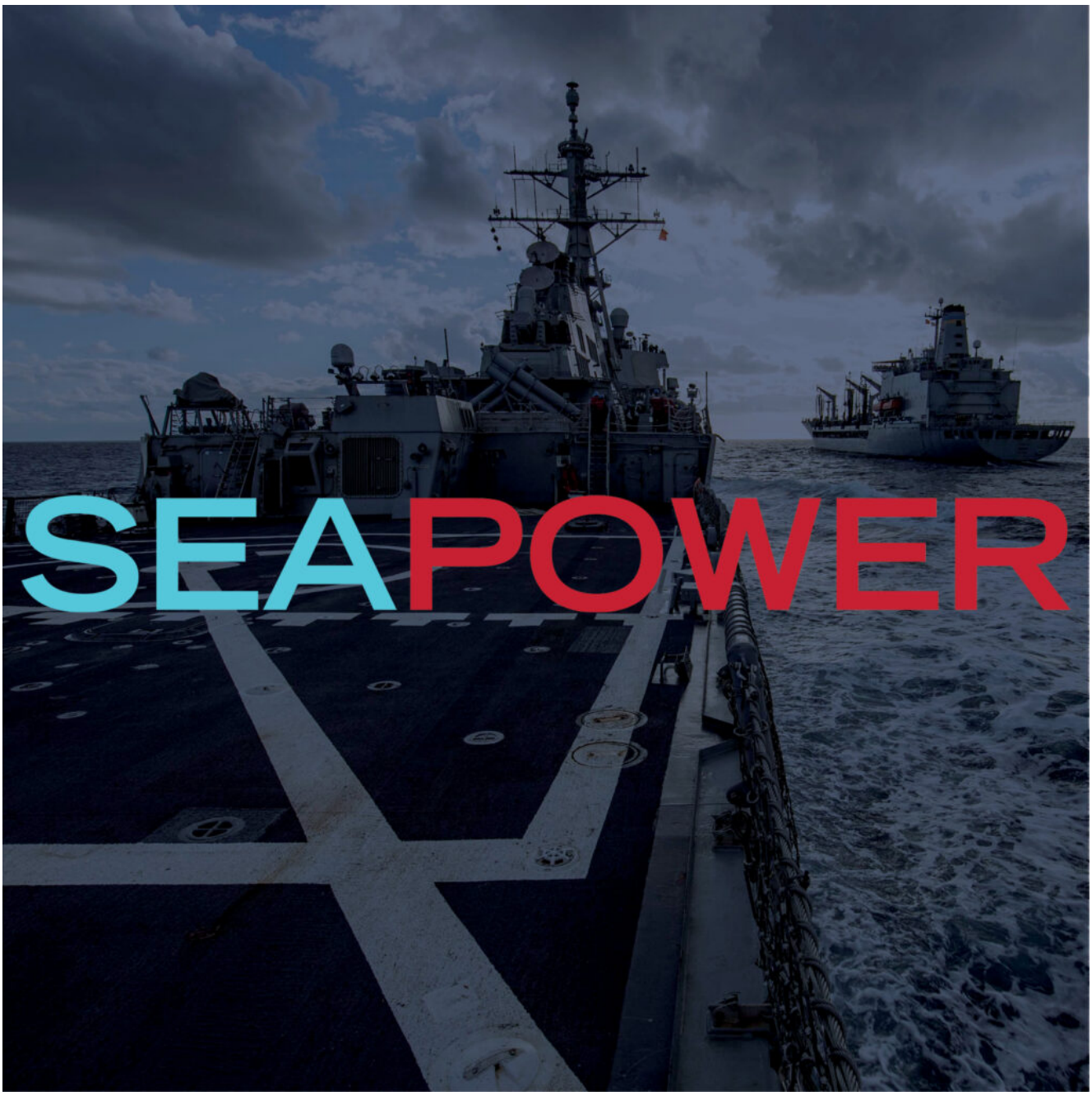
The professionalism and resilience displayed by the crew throughout their deployment directly honored the legacy of their ship’s namesake.

Fitzgerald is named in honor of Lt. William Charles Fitzgerald, a U.S. Navy officer who was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross for his extraordinary heroism in the Vietnam War. The ship's motto, "Protect Your People," is a direct tribute to his sacrifice, when he was mortally wounded while providing covering fire for his evacuating men during an attack by Viet Cong forces.

As a multi-mission surface combatant, Fitzgerald is capable of conducting Anti-Air Warfare (AAW), Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW), and Anti-Surface Warfare (ASuW) operations.

As an integral part of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. 3rd Fleet leads naval forces in the Indo-Pacific and provides the realistic, relevant training necessary to execute the U.S. Navy's role across the full spectrum of military operations. U.S. 3rd Fleet works together with allies and partners to advance freedom of navigation and overflight, the rule of law and other principles that underpin security for the Indo-Pacific region.

Navy Reservists Support Operation Deep Freeze 2026



Jan. 6, 2026 | By Sarah Cannon, Military Sealift Command Pacific

Navy reservists from a Military Sealift Command Pacific expeditionary port unit are currently supporting cargo operations in Port Hueneme, California, in preparation for Operation Deep Freeze 2026, a resupply mission.

The team is overseeing the loadout of supplies and equipment onto the Military Sealift Command chartered heavy lift ship Plantijngracht, which will deliver the cargo to the remote Antarctica outpost of McMurdo Station.

Serving as liaisons between the ship's crew and Military Sealift Command, the reservists are overseeing the loadout of 302 pieces of cargo consisting of containers filled with construction materials, construction equipment, parts for the ongoing barge project at McMurdo Station, as well as dry goods and supplies needed for survival on Antarctica.

"This mission gives us a broader experience of what goes on [for] the logistics side of the Navy; most specifically with MSC and the way they do business," explained Navy Cmdr. Allan Phillips, expeditionary port unit commanding officer. "For us as reservists, it takes us away from the warship aspect of the Navy and focuses us on working with civilians and MSC."

In addition to cargo containers, materials for a 65-ton floating causeway system will also be loaded. The causeway will replace the ice pier at McMurdo Station.

Previously, an ice pier made up of rebar and frozen seawater was used for cargo offloads. Because of the size and weight of the cargo this year, the ice pier is unusable.

Once in Antarctica, the causeway will be assembled into sections on the ship's deck and placed into the water. The sections will be attached to one another to form the final pier.

The four-person unit began operations Dec. 21, 2025, with a brief holiday break. As the "eyes on the pier," the team is providing on-site observations for the onload of cargo, including staying engaged with the ship's crew, the pier crews and serving as a reporting team to the Military Sealift Command operation team in San Diego.

While most people would think working away from home during the holidays would be a hardship, members of the team welcomed the opportunity to be part of the unique operation made up of different military branches and government organizations

working together, something outside their normal routine.

“For the enlisted members of the team, we get to see how this type of mission plays into the big picture of an operation,” said Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Marilyn Lazar, a hospital corpsman assigned to the expeditionary port unit.

Plantijngracht is scheduled to depart Port Hueneme Jan. 8. Following a stop in Christchurch, New Zealand, where the ship will load additional cargo, it will travel to McMurdo Station, traveling approximately 8,040 nautical miles over nearly a month.

Once in Antarctica, members of Navy Cargo Handling Battalion 1 will conduct the offload. Before departing McMurdo Station, the ship will be loaded with retrograde cargo for transportation off the continent. This includes trash and recyclable materials for disposal and equipment no longer required at the station.

Maritime Administration Will Take Over and Streamline Deepwater Port Licensing

Release From the U.S. Department of Transportation

Accelerating deepwater port licensing will unleash American energy dominance, lower energy costs for families

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Secretary of Transportation Sean P. Duffy today announced the Maritime Administration (MARAD) will take on oversight of deepwater port licensing from the U.S.

Coast Guard (USCG). This change will streamline environmental reviews, accelerate license approvals, and lower domestic energy costs.

“The Deepwater Port Program is a key pillar of President Trump’s energy dominance strategy. With this change, we’ll soon accelerate project approvals so the nation can safely utilize more of its abundant natural resources, create more high paying jobs, and lower energy costs for American families,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean P. Duffy.

“MARAD is excited and proud to lead the Deepwater Port Program. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with our partners at the U.S. Coast Guard to make this process more efficient and fuel our energy economy for years to come,” said MARAD Administrator Steve M. Carmel.

While Joe Biden and Pete Buttigieg sat on deepwater port approvals for years to appease Green New Scam radicals, the Trump Administration is in the process of approving multiple licenses in the Gulf of America. These projects will substantially increase our energy revenue and allow America to dominate the global energy market.

Additional Information:

In overseeing the licensing process, MARAD will assume National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) and environmental compliance review duties. USCG will instead support as a Cooperating Agency and will remain responsible for overseeing safety, design, construction, and operations of deepwater port facilities. This transition advances President Trump’s Executive Order on Unleashing American Energy.

The Deepwater Port Act of 1974 (DWPA) establishes a licensing system for ownership, construction, operation, and decommissioning of deepwater port structures located beyond the U.S. territorial sea for the import and export of oil and

natural gas. The DWPA sets out conditions that deepwater port license applicants must meet, including minimization of adverse impacts on the marine environment and submission of detailed plans for construction, operation, and decommissioning of deepwater ports.

Thirty (31) Deepwater Port License Applications have been filed for approval since 1975.

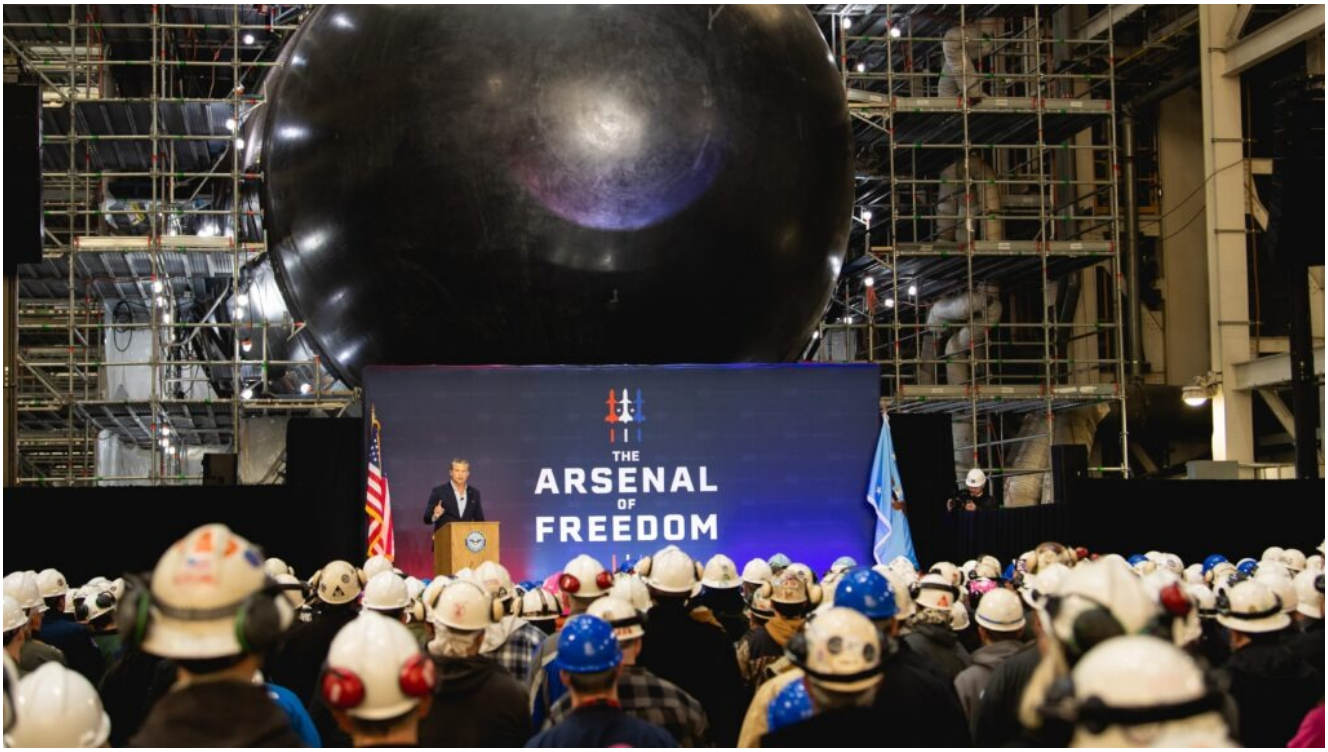
Eighteen (18) applications were filed for licenses to import liquefied natural gas (LNG);

Five (5) applications were filed to export LNG;

Six (6) applications were filed to export oil; and

Two (2) applications were filed for licenses to import oil.

HII Hosts Secretary of War Pete Hegseth at Newport News Shipbuilding



Release From HII

NEWPORT NEWS, Va., Jan. 05, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) — HII (NYSE: HII) hosted Secretary of War Pete Hegseth at its Newport News Shipbuilding division today. The visit is part of Hegseth's "Arsenal of Freedom" industry tour.

During his visit to the shipyard, Hegseth met with HII and shipyard leadership and spent significant time interacting directly with shipbuilders and sailors.

"Our warfighters cannot win without you," Hegseth told shipbuilders. "We are in this fight together, shoulder to shoulder."

"There is an unbreakable line tying the wrench in your hand to the safety and survival of a 22-year-old American sailor patrolling the depths of the Pacific. The quality of your work, your unwavering commitment to excellence, your speed, your patriotism itself. You give our warrior the decisive edge."

"I want to thank Secretary Hegseth for his visit today, and for reinforcing to shipbuilders directly the critical

importance of the work they do for the Navy and the nation," HII CEO and President Chris Kastner said. "Speed matters. Over the past year, in partnership with our government customers, we've taken steps to measurably increase our hiring, grow our retention, and most importantly, improve proficiency levels within our workforce. These actions are yielding a meaningful increase in shipbuilding throughput. With more than 40 ships at Ingalls and NNS in active construction or modernization, our focus in 2026 is on building on this momentum. Every improvement in our operations, every efficiency we unlock, every day we reduce from a schedule translates directly into capability the Navy can deploy to the front line of deterrence and defense, to protect American interests."

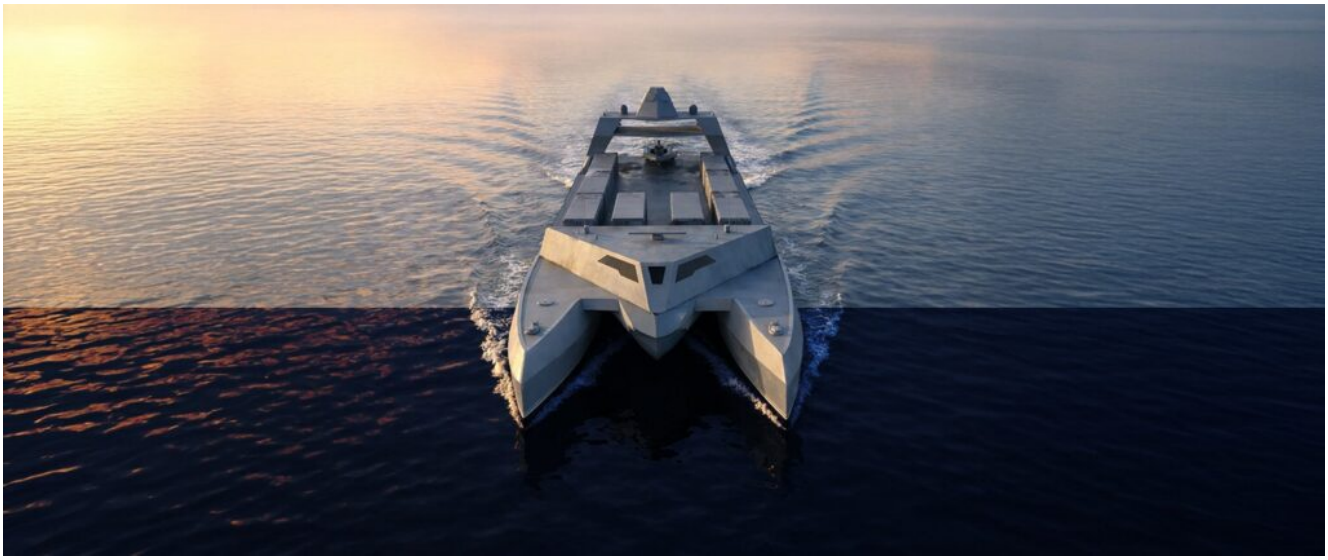
Hegseth saw firsthand how NNS is leveraging technology and state-of-the-art facilities to execute serial-module-production for both Columbia– and Virginia-class submarines and toured these submarines in various stages of construction, from early construction to final assembly and test. He also toured construction progress and met with sailors on aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy (CVN 79), undergoing final outfitting and testing at NNS. The ship will be the world's most lethal aircraft carrier upon delivery to the U.S. Navy.

To increase shipbuilding throughput and meet the increased demand for ships, HII recently embarked on a distributed shipbuilding initiative to improve schedule adherence by partnering with 23 shipyards and fabricators beyond the company's traditional labor market. HII also forged partnerships with international manufacturers to explore meaningful ways to expand capacity including evaluation of adding an additional shipyard in the U.S. At NNS in 2025, shipbuilders also modified shifts to support a 56-hour standard work week in order to finish the year strong.

At 44,000 employees, HII is the largest industrial employer in Virginia and Mississippi. It is also the largest producer of

unmanned underwater vehicles for the U.S. Navy, and the world.

Magnet Defense Acquires Metal Shark to Accelerate Autonomous Capabilities



Release From Magnet Defense

MIAMI, Jan. 6, 2026 /PRNewswire/ – Today, Magnet Defense LLC ("Magnet Defense" or the "Company"), a developer of fully autonomous national security maritime platforms for fleet operations and missile defense missions, announces that it has officially completed its acquisition of Metal Shark, a leading designer and shipbuilder of highly-capable maritime platforms for defense and law enforcement missions. The combination of Magnet Defense and Metal Shark offers U.S. and allied militaries a leading supplier of AI-enabled unmanned surface vessels (USVs). Metal Shark's shipyards are the hubs from which Magnet Defense will deliver critical capabilities for the U.S. Golden Fleet initiative.

The acquisition represents a critical step in Magnet Defense’s strategy to pair advanced robotics and AI-enabled software-defined systems with domestic industrial-scale production. By integrating Metal Shark’s established shipbuilding operations, workforce, and facilities, Magnet Defense moves from prototype development to sustained delivery of autonomous maritime platforms at speed and scale.

Global maritime security demands are increasing rapidly, while U.S. shipbuilding capacity has lagged behind its peer competitors. Magnet Defense addresses this gap by combining artificial intelligence, modular vessel design, and modern manufacturing approaches to rebuild domestic maritime capability and deliver next-generation platforms faster and more efficiently.

Metal Shark brings more than 20 years of experience designing and constructing mission-specific vessels, with over 2,000 vessels delivered to customers worldwide, including over 500 vessels for the U.S. Navy, 600 vessels for the U.S. Coast Guard, and hundreds more for allied nation military forces around the globe.

The company’s two Louisiana manufacturing facilities encompass more than 125,000 square feet of manufacturing space across 40 acres and are supported by a seasoned workforce and a strong engineering organization. These assets provide Magnet Defense with immediate production depth and execution capacity.