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.