Navy Announces New Small Surface Combatant



From SECNAV Public Affairs, Dec. 19, 2025

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Navy announced today its plan to introduce a new class of smaller combatant ships, the FF(X), as a critical component of the Navy's fleet of the future. The FF(X) will be a smaller, more agile surface combatant designed to complement the fleet's larger, multi-mission warships and enhance operational flexibility around the globe.

"To deliver at speed and scale, I've directed the acquisition of a new frigate class based on HII's Legend-Class National Security Cutter design: a proven, American-built ship that has been protecting U.S. interests at home and abroad," said John C. Phelan, Secretary of the Navy. "President Trump and the Secretary of War have signed off on this as part of the Golden Fleet. Our goal is clear: launch the first hull in the water in 2028. To expand capacity and production across our maritime industrial base, we will acquire these ships using a lead yard, and competitive follow-on strategy for multi-yard

construction. Shipyards will be measured against one outcome: delivering combat power to the Fleet as fast as possible."

The FF(X) is a highly adaptable vessel. While its primary mission will be surface warfare, its ability to carry modular payloads and command unmanned systems enables it to execute a broad spectrum of operations, making it ready for the challenges of the modern maritime environment. Small surface combatants have always been essential to the fleet, handling a wide range of missions where a large warship isn't required. The FF(X) will continue this vital role, and will take on more routine operations, enhancing the fleets operational flexibility, adaptability, and mission readiness.

"Like the Medium Landing Ship, leveraging a complete design and production baseline approach will allow the Navy and shipbuilders to reduce costs, schedule and technical risk," said Adm. Daryl Caudle, 34th Chief of Naval Operations. "We know this Frigate design works, we know it operates with the Fleet, and most importantly, we know how to build it now."

FF(X) is engineered for rapid, cost-effective production, enabling this vital capability to the fleet faster. This is made possible by basing the new frigate on HII's proven Legend-Class National Security Cutter. This approach leverages a mature design to deliver ships to our sailors without delay.

The introduction of the FF(X) 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.

HII to Build Small Surface Combatants for US Navy

From HII

PASCAGOULA, Miss., Dec. 19, 2025 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) – HII's

(NYSE: HII) Ingalls Shipbuilding division has been selected by the U.S. Navy to design and build the future small surface combatant (SSC) ship, leveraging the proven design of the Ingalls-built *Legend*-class national security cutter (NSC). With a proven track record of building complex ships, and having the available facility capacity, Ingalls shipbuilders will once again engage in construction activities alongside its destroyer and amphibious ship shipbuilding lines where the national security cutters were built, using the same sequence of build.

“We look forward to supporting the Navy on this critical program,” said Chris Kastner, HII president and CEO. “Speed matters, and the NSC ship design is stable and produceable and will lead to predictable schedules. I have great confidence in the Ingalls team to execute this program, and in our ongoing efforts with our partners to successfully expand the U.S. shipbuilding industrial base to meet the Navy’s needs.”

Currently, Ingalls is simultaneously building three classes of ships (DDG 51 Flight III, LHA, and LPD Flight II) and modernizing the *Zumwalt*-class of guided missile destroyers with technology upgrades including the incorporation of the conventional prompt strike weapons system. Ingalls supported the U.S. Coast Guard for nearly two decades by building and delivering 10 *Legend*-class national security cutters (NSCs). The final cutter was delivered in October 2023.

HII has invested over $1 billion in the infrastructure, facility and toolsets at Ingalls Shipbuilding, positioning the shipyard to support next-generation systems and platforms. HII this year has distributed shipbuilding work to 23 outsourcing partners, and established partnerships with international manufacturers, to explore meaningful ways to expand capacity including evaluation of adding an additional shipyard in the U.S.