

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.